

**HOW DO YUKON INDIGENOUS PEOPLE DEFINE HEALING FROM THE
RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL EXPERIENCE?**

by

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Abstract

This study used a storytelling method within the paradigm of an Indigenous methodology. In Canada, qualitative evidence has revealed that the Indigenous people have been affected by colonization and the residential school experience. These effects include but are not limited to trauma, intergenerational trauma, cultural interruption, genocide, segregation, racism, prejudices, and forced assimilation. For Yukon Indigenous people, first-generation survivors were directly impacted, and the next three generations are also indirectly. Efforts by Western counselling methods to support Indigenous people in Canada including those in Yukon with whom the researcher is closely associated have not been successful. This study investigated what method(s) might work to better support and sustain Indigenous people who attended Yukon residential schools. This study is the first academic investigation in the Yukon to look at first-generation survivors and record their stories about their healing journey. Nine Yukon Indigenous residential school survivors (5 females, 4 males) between the ages of 62 to 77, who had been on their healing path for a minimum of two years, shared their stories. This investigation revealed that traditional healing practices were useful for these residential school survivors in starting and sustaining their healing journey. One of the implications of the results of this study is that Western counselling methods must acknowledge, include, and work with our people in a culturally safe and competent manner. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action stipulates that Canada's health care system must include Indigenous peoples' right to proper health care. Clinical, practical, social, and methodological implications are discussed, and recommendations for future research as well as practical interventions are suggested.

Lay Summary

This study used an Indigenous research method by asking residential school survivors to tell their story about their healing journey. In Canada, previous research has shown that the Indigenous people have been affected by the actions of Euro-Canadian settlers inhabiting and taking control over the Indigenous people by creating residential schools. This control resulted in Indigenous people being devastated throughout the generations, suffering cultural harm, murder, separation, racism, and forced integration into Euro-Canadian culture. Western counselling practices tried to support Indigenous people but were not helpful. This study investigated what might work to better support and sustain Indigenous people. The research is the first educational study in the Yukon to look at survivors and record their healing stories. This research revealed that Traditional Indigenous healing practices were useful for these survivors in starting and sustaining their healing. Suggestions are discussed and recommendations for future research are put forward.

Preface

This thesis is original, independent, and unpublished work by the author, Maisie Smith, and was conducted in accordance with the protocol approved by the University of British Columbia Behavioural Research Ethics Board (BREB). Ethics certificate number H16-01240 was issued by BREB on June 27, 2016.

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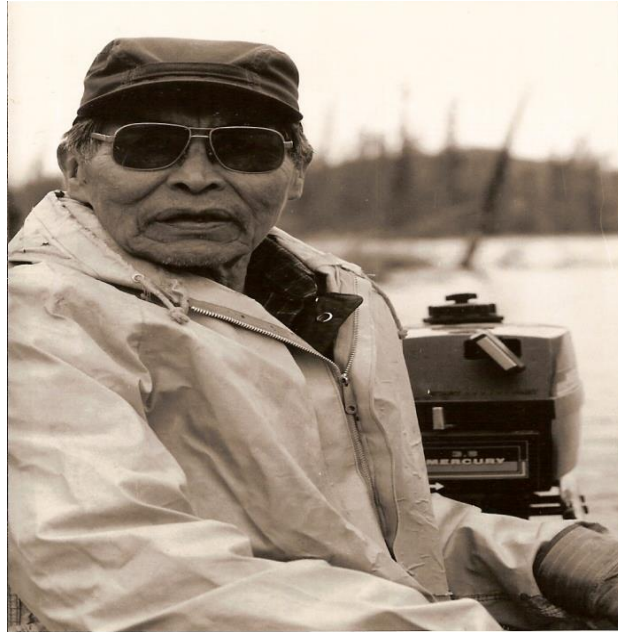
Dedication

For my late father

A residential school survivor

Borden Smith – Ganaxtedi Crow Clan

October 24, 1918 – May 29, 2001



Gunalchîsh Dad for all the stories you shared with me about our people and traditional ways, your knowledge and wisdom was remarkable. I know you are with us always we carry you in our hearts and memories. You prepared me so well for listening with my heart for the storywork in this thesis.

I love you.

Chapter 1: The Journey Begins (Introduction)

Personal Narrative

As an Indigenous person growing up in our culture, my parents told me we had an obligation to ‘not just say our name’ when introducing ourselves. They asked, “how will people know who we are and how to relate to us if we do not place ourselves”? Absolon (2011) and Lavallee (2009) state that Indigenous researchers must locate themselves in their research by identifying who they are, where they come from and who are our Ancestors. Through the identification of ourselves and our worldviews, people can place us, and this is an important way to develop trust and understanding (Lavallee, 2009).

I am a part of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations in the unceded traditional territory of the Southern Tutchone people. Our ancestry includes Tlingit and Northern Tutchone. We follow our mother’s lineage; she belonged to the Wolf and Daklaweidi Clan, and her ancestry was Tlingit. Our father was from the Carcross/Tagish First Nations in the unceded traditional territory of the Tagish people, and his ancestry was Tlingit and Northern Tutchone. Our ancestry comes from Southeast Alaska, and I am one of the direct descendants of Keish (aka Skookum Jim Mason) from our father’s lineage. Keish was our father’s great, great uncle. As a child growing up our parents told us many times “this is who you are and this is how you will introduce yourself when asked”. I have learned through doing this that many people from our culture can situate me immediately by saying “yes I know who you are now and I know your family”. This introduction is also seen as a sign of respect and I feel like I am understood and welcomed by the people and in turn, they tell me who they are so I was able to place them.

In this document, I use the terms “Aboriginal,” “Indigenous” “Indian,” and “First Nations” interchangeably, and each of them refers to all people of Indigenous ancestry.

Depending on the context and preference, the terms used in this document are conveyed out of respect for the scholars and groups who use these terms in their research. For the methodological portion of this thesis, “participant,” “storyteller,” “Elder,” and “teacher” all refer to the research subjects, and they are used interchangeably by myself and the scholars cited in this document. I refer to “researcher,” “student,” and “learner” to also mean researcher based on the various context these terms are used by the research scholars and myself.

I have worked with our people for approximately fourteen years in the health and social fields. I have counselled and supported our people who attended residential schools or were second and third-generation survivors of the residential school experience. I discovered through my work experience that mainstream Western counselling psychology does not fit with or support our people on their healing journey from the traumatic effects of the residential school experience. This research is important to me because I want to continue to work with our people in an effective, constructive, and holistic way that includes traditional healing practices as a part of the counselling process.

As S. Wilson (group presentation, October 14, 2015) points out, Aboriginal students are at university for their families, community, and grandchildren, and not solely for the betterment of themselves. My educational endeavors have always been to support our community in healing from the effects of colonization. Growing up as a second-generation survivor of the residential school experience, I continue to see the effects of colonization on our family (who are all first-generation survivors) and our community. As a result of colonization, I have worked with many of our people who are traumatized, disconnected, and split between two worlds (Western and traditional); this split has created many social issues for our people. I realize that I am also

affected by colonization and I have worked hard to decolonize myself as I entered into the research process utilizing an Indigenous methodology.

As I walk in two worlds, I find myself, as Absolon (2011) indicated, having each of my feet in different canoes and I struggle to keep my balance. My colonized beliefs lack faith when my Indigenous side says to have faith in the unknown and trust the process because the process will happen as it should. The colonized side of me struggles with a journey that is unknown and wants to hold on to preconceived notions of how I think the research should unfold. I realize this doubt and uneasiness comes from Western colonial influences, and if I allow our Indigenous worldview to influence me, then confidence, strength, and pride come forth. I find myself wavering between colonial and traditional influences, and I can only hope that I will feed my traditional influences more to help me see the potential of what I am about to do as a researcher. I want to maintain balance in the four directions, and I have to pray to Creator for strength to hold on to my Aboriginal identity as I try to meet the requirements of the academy and not lose who I am by respecting the knowledge I will acquire from our community. I was told to learn to live in the environment [the academy] you are in - it's for a short time - and to take what I need to help our people and leave the rest (R. Tetlich, personal communication, August 13, 2015).

Absolon (2011) indicates that it is easier to use Western research approaches that allow the researcher to maintain an objective, distant method, and just get the research done. A Western approach would mean disconnecting on many levels from the personal, spiritual, and interconnectedness that an Indigenous methodology would include (Absolon, 2011). As an Indigenous researcher, this would be like “cutting off my nose to spite my face”.

Interconnectedness cannot be ignored as it is an essential part of our cultural beliefs and influences how we view the world around us. Using an Indigenous methodology within the

academy means taking a trail that is less travelled and will require some brush clearing along the way (Absolon, 2011). Absolon (2011) states:

Indigenous voices across the land are echoing that we must continue to assert our knowledge and power as Indigenous peoples by speaking in our own voices and providing a space for the voices of our people to come forward. We ought not to be silenced or to be afraid to speak in our own voice for fear of reprisal or criticism (p. 146).

Absolon (2011) describes how the academy wants to influence or steer Indigenous researchers to do research within the confines of Western guidelines because the “gatekeepers” do not fully understand or see the value in what we want to study. She calls this “intellectual assimilation” (p. 146). I wavered about using an Indigenous methodology and was even warned that this approach would be more daunting and challenging within a Western academy, but a voice inside me, my heart, and most importantly all our relations would not be silenced. Lavallee (2009) discusses this very issue with a student who was also discouraged from using an Indigenous methodology because it would not be seen as valid within the academy.

For Indigenous researchers to decolonize our research, we must move forward by advancing our ways of knowing within the academy. Indigenous ways of knowing reflect a core value - reciprocity. “We need to give back to future Indigenous scholars by pushing forth the recognition of Indigenous knowledge in the academy and research by publishing this work” (Lavallee, 2009, p. 36). I am optimistic this research will assist in blazing the trail for future scholars in the academy to do research from a decolonized perspective.

The longest journey a person might take is from their head to their heart (Absolon, 2011). Indigenous methodologies are often driven by the heart and spirit and this journey is not easy (Absolon, 2011). Research develops naturally and can be hard to explain because for Aboriginal researchers there is more than one way to explain or express besides the written word. For our people, an explanation can come in the form of storytelling, graphics, video, dance, drumming,

songs, arts, poetry, visions, metaphors, and dreams (Absolon, 2011; Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008).

I relate to the challenges of using an Indigenous methodology because I also struggle with trying to explain myself in written form when my culture comes from an oral tradition. Metaphorically, the struggle to explain an Indigenous methodology in writing is like trying to teach someone to set a gopher trap through written instruction when it would be so much easier to demonstrate or have the student set a trap.

The Colonial Problem

As therapists, when we think about counselling we need to consider who we will be counselling and what method will work best for a particular population. Western counselling practices and theories come from a Euro-centric perspective and may not fit with other cultural groups and different worldviews (Duran & Duran, 1995; McCormick, 1996). For most of our people using linear Western counselling practices and theories has not worked well to support our peoples' healing. Duran & Duran (1995) speak of the Western thinking that is part of the foundation of psychological therapy:

“In no way does Western thinking address any system of cognition except its own. Given that Judeo-Christian belief systems include notions of the Creator putting hands in charge of all creations, it is easy to understand why this group of people assumes that it also possesses the ultimate way of describing psychological phenomena for all humanity. In reality, the thought that what is right comes from one worldview produces a narcissistic worldview that desecrates and destroys much of what is known as culture and cosmological perspective” (p. 17).

This explains why many of our people refuse to seek counselling from Western therapists because the very services they seek out are a part of the original problem (Duran & Duran, 1995). I have recently pondered this, and it is clear to me that most of our people do not seek out psychological services from the dominant culture that assimilated our people. Metaphorically

speaking it would be like escaping from the hands of the enemy only for the enemy to later provide trauma counselling for imprisoning you – this does not feel like the best or safest approach.

An important point made by Cavalieri (2013) that she addresses in her discussions with American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) peoples is that spirituality is deeply connected within the psyche of the person. Mainstream Western thinking and therapies do not make this distinction and it is problematic for our people who seek counselling. AIAN people believe that in tribal cosmology well-being is linked to reciprocity by nurturing human spirituality with other spirits of the physical world (Cavalieri, 2013). An example of this worldview is how I find wellness, harmony, and balance by spending time in nature, touching the trees, listening to waves on the beach, hearing the Raven speak to me and feeling our Ancestors around me. This spiritual harmony comes from knowing I am on the lands of our people who have walked here for tens of thousands of years and I still feel their presence and energy.

There is an obvious connection to the land, animals, spirit, and all our relations that goes beyond the Western medical model's conception of mental wellness. Western thought believes that we are all linearly progressing through time and with each era we are improving as a society (Cavalieri, 2013). For our people, the idea of improving with each era is stifled by the belief that as an oppressed people we have biologically internalized the effects of racism and thus are opposed to this idea that we are progressing in the current context. The ongoing threat of losing our language and traditional knowledge with each passing day due to the loss of our respected Elders explicitly challenges this notion of progress (Cavalieri, 2013).

Heilbron and Guttman (2000) point out that Western counselling failed our people because cultural and traditional beliefs and methods were not used in the counselling process.

McCormick (1996) states “despite good intentions on behalf of the mental health professions, one culture should not impose its concepts of causation or systems of classification on another culture” (p. 164). For non-Aboriginal counsellors to successfully counsel our people there must be openness, acceptance, and importance placed on traditional healing beliefs and practices. There needs to be an awareness of the issues around respect and trust in developing rapport. Collaborative therapies appear to be more acceptable to our people, especially with regards to cultural practices (McCormick, 1996).

A collective approach to counselling versus one-to-one counselling seems to be a better fit with our people. For example, group counselling set-up as a circle and sharing our teachings is an appropriate method. Traditional healing may extend beyond the circle to include the community, which may go against Western counselling ethics regarding confidentiality. This approach to traditional healing speaks to collective versus independent approaches to counselling. There may also be a need to include an Aboriginal co-leader to be a part of the group when a non-Aboriginal counsellor is leading the circle (Heilbron & Guttman, 2000).

Before colonization, our people held holistic worldviews that influenced traditional ways of healing. As Western counselling practices have in many ways failed to support our people in the process of healing from the effects of colonization, questions arise about how this can be done more effectively. Debates around whether or not Western counselling and traditional healing practices should be integrated, done in collaboration or remain as separate approaches to healing for our people is a very complex issue. For our people who are on their healing journey, there could be other reasons and supports to help them that have nothing to do with Western or traditional practices. As a traditional counsellor, it is important for me to understand the various

ways that our people view healing, and what they find is or was healing for them to be well informed on the counselling methods I implement.

Our Traditional Healing

We have practiced our healing methods since 12,000 to 40,000 years ago, and they are considered time-honored, continuous practices that are the oldest form of holistic medicine (Robbins & Dewar, 2011; Struthers, Eschiti, & Patchell, 2004). Healing is practiced by many Indigenous tribes and cultures around the world and is deeply rooted and complex (Struthers, Eschiti, & Patchell, 2004). Traditional healing is defined uniquely by different tribes and is based in language and land (Robbins & Dewar, 2011). Our healing is grounded in the interconnectedness between humans and the earth, where the earth is seen as a source of life and not as a resource (Robbins & Dewar, 2011). Indigenous medicines derive from the natural world, whereas modern medicine follows Western science (Struthers & Eschiti, 2005). Many Indigenous healers see traditional healing as the original method and not alternative medicine in the way that Western medical science does (Struthers, Eschiti, & Patchell, 2004). Traditional healing stands alone and is not considered a predecessor to Western medicine (Struthers, Eschiti, & Patchell, 2004).

In Indigenous healing, there is a focus on the spiritual, the sacred and supernatural forces (Struthers, Eschiti, & Patchell, 2004). This focus includes balance in the four directions within the medicine wheel: physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental (Robins & Dewar, 2011). Compared to Western medicine, which is more physical and physiological, traditional healing is mystical and depends on phenomena. For instance, Struthers, Eschiti, & Patchell (2004) describe how a man was able to heal through touch by taking away the crippling effects of a snake bite in

another. Our healing practices are sacred, powerful, mysterious, and an integral part of our beliefs and way of life.

Our traditional healing and healers are defined by various names and terms. The name ‘traditional medicine’ is a colonial name introduced to English-speaking tribes, and not an Indigenous concept (Robbins & Dewar, 2011). Traditional healing has been called: Indian medicine, Native American medicine, Traditional healing, Traditional and Spiritual interpretation (Struthers, Eschiti, & Patchell, 2004), Spiritualist, Herbalists, and Diagnosis Specialist (Robbins & Dewar, 2011). Other terms used were medicine men or women, bad or good medicine and medicine bag or bundle (Struthers, Eschiti, & Patchell, 2004). When I worked as a First Nation Liaison Worker (FNLW) I carried a medicine bundle given to me by traditional healers to protect and support me in my work with our people in the hospital and continuing care facilities.

Our traditional healing practices and methods have been handed down orally through storytelling (Struthers & Eschiti, 2005). By listening to the healing stories of our Ancestors the listener discovers their true self. The listener takes on the responsibility of relating and applying these teachings to their personal lives so they can thrive by living a healthy lifestyle (Struthers & Eschiti, 2005). The hands-on experience with traditional healers and their methods is a culturally driven way of learning about traditional healing on a very personal level (Robbins & Dewar, 2011). Traditional healing practices are unique for each tribe (R. Tetlich, personal communication, August 13, 2015). I remember speaking to traditional healers who said that to become a traditional healer you had to have a sign, message or natural talent and that it was your responsibility and role in this life. There was an emphasis on the need to spend a lot of time with an experienced healer to become a qualified traditional healer.

Struthers & Eschiti (2005) give some explicit examples of our healers who worked with our people to cure them of diseases such as cancer as well as traumatic events in their lives. The ceremonies the healers used were: the Sundance, Yuwipi, Ojibwe Healing Ceremony, Shaking Tent Ceremony and Shakerism. One example is an account by a 58-year-old man who spoke of the trauma he experienced when his wife was raped, and how this subsequently ended their marriage. The man describes how his ex-wife was able to get the help she needed to heal, but he did not know what to do with his trauma. He went to a traditional healer who helped him by using the Shakerism ceremony, the process of putting your hands on a person and praying. The healer elicited the help of other people to also put their hands on him and pray for him as the healer worked to help the man with his trauma. The outcome was that the man was able to deal with and work on his healing and he went on to help others with their healing, a process he describes as working with the energy he received from the healer that he was able to pass on to others (Struthers & Eschiti, 2005).

The power of Indigenous medicines within our culture point to the value that traditional healing practices have for helping our people. When I worked in the hospital as an FNLW, I remember using ashes a healer made from a sacred fire to help our people in the hospital. The patient was in her dying time and was having trouble sleeping at night because many spirits were coming to her and they were upsetting and scaring her. My co-worker and I got the ashes to place in her room, and we walked around her room saying a prayer to Creator asking for the spirits to let our patient rest. The patient reported back the next morning that she had a good night sleep and nothing bothered her. A similar incident happened with our sister when she was a child and was waking up with bad nightmares of something coming to her in her sleep. Our great grandma went to the fire pit and put ashes around the tent. Our sister was able to sleep

comfortably after that. Clearly, the power of our traditional medicines speaks volumes as legitimate and effective ways to help our people heal.

Struthers, Eschiti & Patchell (2004) point out that there is very little written or recorded information about the practice of our healing methods. They speculate that part of the reason maybe fear of ridicule, the risk of misuse, is taught orally, seen as sacred, and healing is a private or personal matter. Our recent past shows that traditional healing has not fit well or been accepted as a legitimate practice by medical science's narrow views, especially regarding our rituals and ceremonial practices (Struthers, Eschiti & Patchell, 2004). Indigenous medicine is kept confidential because some medicines are highly regarded for specific purposes (R. Tetlich, personal communication, August 13, 2015).

In the United States and Canada, the practice of Indigenous medicines by our people was banned or out-lawed by settlers that came to our lands (Robbins & Dewar, 2011; Struthers & Eschiti, 2005). In Canada, the Indian Act banned ceremonies and potlatches between 1884 to 1951 as a part of the assimilation process along with the development of the residential schools (Robbins & Dewar, 2011). Traditional healing has a long history of being investigated by religious historians and anthropologists (Struthers & Eschiti, 2005). Our practices were seen as witchcraft and unholy by Western religions (Struthers & Eschiti, 2005; McCabe, 2008) even though our herbs and plants were also used in Western medicine, such as quinine for the treatment of malaria (McCabe, 2008). Healers who continued to practice were put in prison, so practices went underground, and were done in secret (Robbins & Dewar, 2011; Struthers & Eschiti, 2005).

Today, laws have been amended, and our healers are more open to sharing their healing knowledge with outsiders as contributors to modern medicine (Robbins & Dewar, 2011;

Struthers & Eschiti, 2005). Robbins & Dewar (2011) see the need for traditional healing practices to support and heal our people from the effects of colonization and residential school. This literature validates the need to include traditional healing to support our people. Indigenous medicines are important and a distinct approach to health and well-being, and they should not be appropriated by mainstream health and social organizations (Robbins & Dewar, 2011).

Chapter 2: The Colonized to the Decolonized (Literature Review)

What Needs to Change?

As a second-generation survivor (all my family went to residential school except me) of the residential school experience, I have worked with many of our people in the health and social field and found there was a lack of inclusion of our healing practices in the counselling domain. There is a need within mainstream counselling psychology to include cultural competency and/or safety (Gone, 2011). Cultural competency is the capacity to interact effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds such as with our people. Different worldviews will affect the way a therapist counsels a client from a different culture (McCormick, 2009), especially since most counselling theories/practices stem from a very scientific Western model of healing (McCabe, 2008).

There is a need for the recognition and collaboration of our traditional healing practices within the dominant culture in the field of counselling psychology (McCormick, 2009). What should our traditional healing practices look like for residential school survivors of trauma? According to Gone (2013), the counselling practices used with our people often fail because there is no inclusion of traditional and cultural beliefs in therapy. Finding recent and relevant literary resources for this topic has been limited as my review revealed there is a lack of research in the area of residential school survivors and the counselling resources needed to support them. The purpose of this literature review was to see the gaps in research and explore how additional research was needed to further show that our healing practices can work in collaboration with mainstream counselling psychology. There is virtually no literature to indicate that any academic research has ever been done on this subject in the Yukon. The themes within my literary search indicated that our traditional healing practices are needed within counseling psychology if

therapists were to be more effective in supporting our people to recover from the trauma of colonization – specifically the residential school experience.

This study will address the problem through an in-depth exploration of how our residential school survivors define healing. Did our people use traditional healing practices, access Western counselling methods, use a combination of both or were there other circumstances that supported our residential schools survivors on their healing path?

The Colonized - The History of the First Peoples

Prior to European contact, our people had political, cultural, social, and economic systems that evolved around a very holistic approach to living their lives (Poonwassie & Charter, 2005). Quinn (2007) agrees that our people had the capacity and collective nature to determine our own path in regards to our culture. We had control over our own religious, familial, and educational traditions. When European settlers arrived in our territories they believed Indigenous people were inferior and required assimilation into Western and Christian ways of living. This also gave the settlers access to undermine and steal our land and resources (Thomas & Bellefeuille, 2006). Years of colonization and assimilation resulted in the genocide of many of our people (Quinn, 2007).

Part of the assimilation process was the development of residential schools by the dominant cultures' theology and government to “kill the Indian and save the man” (Gone, 2013, p. 683). Our children who went to these schools were subjected to sexual, physical, psychological, and spiritual abuse (Quinn, 2007). As a result of the residential school experience and ongoing colonization some of our people developed various social issues such as substance abuse, family violence, suicidal behavior, and mental health problems. The intergenerational

impacts from the residential school experience continue to affect the generations that came after the first generation who went to these schools (Quinn, 2007).

Many of the social issues that continue to plague our people are a result of the ongoing processes of colonization and the outcome of this historical trauma (Quinn, 2007). In 2007, Quinn describes the effects of the residential school experience as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Research indicates that while trauma and traumatic experiences can affect any population, for our people the multigenerational effects of trauma are greater because the population was affected on such a large scale with continued traumatic exposure (Elias, Mignonette, Hall, Hong, Hart & Sareen, 2012). Some of the trauma effects include depression, psychic numbing, hyper-vigilance, fixation to trauma, somatic symptoms, survivor guilt, triggers, flashbacks, flooding, lateral violence, inability to assess risk, and re-victimization by people in authority (Quinn, 2007).

Our people have higher rates of suicide, violence, substance abuse, and incarceration than the national average (Government of Canada, 2015; National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, 2013). The overall health of our people indicates we have poorer health than most Canadians (NCCAHA, 2013) and we have poorer living conditions (Government of Canada, 2015). Our people make up about 4.3 percent of the population, yet we are over-represented in the prison system at 24.4 percent, based on the entire prison population (Government of Canada, 2015). This is due to systemic discrimination, racism and cultural prejudices. Due to the intergenerational trauma, loss, and violence caused by colonization, we have economic and social disadvantages (Government of Canada, 2015).

Residential Schools and Yukon Indigenous People

In the Yukon, our peoples' experiences were similar yet unique compared to the rest of Canada's Indigenous population. In 1876, the Northwest Territories included Saskatchewan, Northwest Territories, Yukon, Manitoba, Alberta, Ontario, Quebec, and Nunavut (The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2012). For our people in the north, the assimilation policies of the Canadian government were not required because there was no demand for our lands. Due to the high cost of developing and maintaining a treaty with our peoples, the government decided that our people in the north could continue with our way of life by living off the land, trapping, and trading (The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2012).

The schools in the Yukon can best be described in two phases, first the missionary school phase, then the residential school periods (The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2012). In 1891 Bishop Bompas developed the first missionary school, called the Forty Mile Mission. The missionary schools lasted until the mid-1950's, when the federal government took over and developed residential schools for our children. In 1911, Choutla School was opened in Carcross, Yukon and many of our children from around the territory were taken from their homes to attend (The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2012).

A prominent respected Tlingit Elder, the late Angela Sidney, spoke of how she would be punished if she spoke her Tlingit language, or spoke to her brother (The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2012). Choutla School developed a reputation for having harsh punishments, poor health, child labor, and malnutrition (The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2012).

I have heard many stories of not being able to speak our languages or to our siblings while at these schools. Our sister could not speak to our brother who stood across from her in

lineups at this school. I remember our late father saying when he went to Choutla he was required to spend half a day in school learning and the other half outside cutting wood to keep the school warm during the winter months. Our father noted that many of the non-Aboriginal students who also attended this school did not have to do any manual labor and received a full day's education. He said some students would set rabbit snares around the school to get extra food because of the poor quality or lack of food at Choutla.

There is consensus within the literature suggesting that residential schools were a catalyst for the breakdown of our families, resulting in alienation, and loss of our cultural beliefs and identity, family and community cohesion, and spiritual connections (Gone, 2011; Heilbron & Guttman, 2000; McCabe, 2007; Quinn, 2007; Thomas & Bellefeuille, 2006). My critical response to this consensus is I would fully agree with the research findings of all these scholars. I have seen first-hand the effects residential school has on our culture and I have experienced the effects of the residential school experience as a second-generation survivor.

The undertones of oppression (colonization continues)

Many of our people will not access or embrace mainstream counselling resources to help deal with the social issues they suffer because there is a lack of cultural competency and spiritual connection (Heilbron & Guttman, 2000; McCormick, 1996; Thomas & Bellefeuille, 2006; Twigg & Hengen, 2009). Mainstream counselling practices tend to focus on individuation, self-actualization, self-expression, and independence (McCormick, 2009). Western thought processes influence the idea of individualism and autonomy regarding wellness, and they overshadow the wellness of our tribal or kin relationships (Cavalieri, 2013). Individual wellness is important, but for AIAN people, their well-being is also connected to their communities because of a shared

past and future. Colonial influences and Western thought processes in mainstream counselling set a standard by which all people are compared (Cavalieri, 2013).

As the worldview and perspectives of our people are very holistic, they tend not to access mainstream counselling, and when they do there are high drop-out rates. Separating people from their families and communities through Western counselling methods does not fit with the worldview of our people (Stewart, 2008; Twigg & Hengen, 2009). McCormick (1996) concurs with these findings by noting that approximately half of our people who do access the mental health system drop out after attending only one session. Our people who seek counselling from mainstream counselling practices have turned to traditional healing practices to wipe out the effects of mainstream treatment they received (McCabe, 2007). So, what are some of the theories within mainstream counselling that may not fit well for our people who seek counselling within Western practices?

The Cognitive Behavior Family Therapy (CBFT) approach is a very directive, teaching and coaching approach to family counselling where the therapist is the expert (Gehart, 2014). CBFT stems from the idea of reward and punishment (Gehart, 2014), something that parallels the same stance in the residential schools most of our people attended. Residential school survivors were punished and rewarded for behaviours considered good or bad by the gatekeepers of these schools. Clearly, CBFT will not work with our people who seek out counselling from Western practices to deal with the trauma of attending residential schools. This approach is not compatible with Indigenous philosophies and knowledge systems that inform their respective healing approaches (McCabe, 2008; Hart 2007). Our knowledge and philosophies are based on the mind, emotions, and body, which are a part of the Medicine Wheel (McCabe, 2008).

The Medicine Wheel is in the shape of a circle with four quadrants that include the physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental. The four quadrants make up the foundation for human beings and how we live our life (McCabe, 2008). Everything around us exists and is based on the principle of survival (Hart, 2007). Our survival is a part of this natural energy and the earth's cycles and is designed to ensure balance and harmony in the overall well-being of our lives. Everything that exists has roles and responsibilities in this life. Spirits link all things together (all our relations), and all human beings are a part of Creation. In essence, we are in relation to each other and all things are connected. Creation is a reflection of different elements that rely on spiritual and psychological strength from life-giving and nourishing forces. Our people live in harmony with nature, and we pray to the Creator or Great Spirit for our guidance, support, and connection (Hart, 2007).

The Western scientific model finds our philosophy and knowledge base objectionable and is uncomfortable with our worldview (McCabe, 2008). The Western scientific model only accepts concrete evidence-based ways of knowing. Most Indigenous cultures have for thousands of years followed and believed in the mental, emotional, spiritual and physical as the foundation for all human beings. Narrative and experiential dialogue support our four directions. For Western science to accept or support this way of knowing and being is seen as repugnant. Western cultures refuse to acknowledge our unique ways of knowing, and the value we place on entities around us (McCabe, 2008).

The underlying philosophy of CBFT comes from B.F. Skinner's operant conditioning which uses reward and punishment to correct behaviour. This approach is rooted in experiential psychology derived from a Western scientific model of therapy (Gehart, 2014). As this theory is grounded in a scientific approach, it does not take into consideration spiritual aspects that many

of our people see as important components of healing. CBFT comes from a hierarchical perspective and is not suitable with the philosophical stance of our people who believe in a holistic healing approach. I can see how this authoritative approach to counselling could be reflective of colonization and it may do more harm than good for our people.

Treatment with CBFT involves assessment and developing a written contract with the client (Gehart, 2014). I question an assessment created in the dominant culture that would be used with our people and whether this standardized assessment took cultural differences into consideration. Many Western counselling theories and assessments come from a Euro-centric perspective that is mainly applicable to their population, and due to standardization does not consider cultural differences. Attributable to the pervasive violations of trust among settler-Indigenous relationships, counsellors' risk perpetuating mistrust by ignoring the poor reputation of "contracts" associated with the legacy of broken treaties and disrespected Aboriginal rights and title.

Solution-focused brief therapy (SFBT) emphasizes the future with minimal discussion about the presenting problem or past concerns (Gehart, 2014). This therapeutic approach looks for solutions and then takes steps to achieve them (Gehart, 2014). For residential school survivors, this approach is directive and does not allow the client to tell his/her story that connects the past, the present, the future and dismisses belief in interconnectedness for our people. Archibald (2008) speaks of the power to heal and sooth when our people can tell their stories.

Stories have a synergistic aspect that connects the storyteller and the listener (Archibald, 2008). Some stories can be told and the listener will glean what they want from the story and how it relates to their personal life experiences. Stories can open the door to our emotions, our

feelings, and can create a powerful experience. When a story is told there can be personal lessons on proper social behaviour that connects the listener to their own life experiences. Archibald (2008) describes this process like an arrow that goes deep inside you and immediately starts to work on your mind to think about how you are living your life.

I think this theory of the synergistic aspects of storytelling relates to the client-counsellor relationship and by working together, we can get more done because we are not alone in the process. I wonder does the sharing of stories between counsellor and client also help to heal both. Is this not also therapy from a traditional perspective? When I read the story “The Creator and the Flea” (Archibald, 2008, p. 116), I found the story had an emotional and insightful effect on me because I could relate to it. I was able to see parallels in my life and I wonder if I shared with my clients if they would also make a personal connection that might be healing to them.

Client’s emotions are signs about what works or does not work and where a client wants to go (Gehart, 2014). For residential school survivors, emotional displays in the counselling session may be limited and the therapist would get little information of where the client wants to go. Residential school survivors did not show emotions as a way to remain safe in the schools because the display of emotions most times resulted in punishment. Residential school survivors have suffered significant trauma from the residential school experience, and this trauma continues to be passed on inter-generationally (Yellow Horse Brave Heart, Chase, Elkins, & Altschul, 2011). Ongoing discrimination, racism, and oppression of our people compound the trauma. Unresolved historical grief from the many losses our people have experienced have had a devastating effect. Residential school survivors developed emotional distress from thinking about the trauma they experienced and this created increased anger and depression. Our people had ways of grieving that were interrupted by the residential schools and the Western laws that

dictated how we could bury our people. The ceremonies and practices we followed were prevented so we were unable to grieve the losses in a way that was therapeutic for our people (Yellow Horse Brave Heart, et al., 2011).

Yellow Horse Brave Heart et al., (2011) speak of the one-year grieving process that our people would have when there was a loss in the community. For our Tlingit and Northern Tutchone culture, we also grieved for one year from the day the person passed. At that time, we would have a second ceremony called the headstone potlatch where we would place a headstone on the person's grave and celebrate their life. After the potlatch, our grieving would be done. The option to grieve longer was also allowed and respected, so a headstone potlatch may not happen at the one year mark of the death.

SFBT believes that most counselling can be completed within one to ten sessions. However, it does acknowledge if there are issues around sexual or substance abuse, treatment could take years (Gehart, 2014). Our people have a complex past and treatment can take years because of the trauma and abuses experienced in residential school. Therefore, using an approach that does not delve too deeply into discussing the problem or the past would not be conducive to healing.

SFBT does not take into consideration the balance in the four directions by including physical and spiritual aspects, but it does appear to address emotional and mental issues. I wonder just how SFBT defines this compared to our beliefs. SFBT is a therapy approach that seems to only touch on the surface of issues by not deeply exploring the underlying reasons for the problems and concerns. Residential school survivors can have circumstances that are rooted in adverse childhood experiences and trauma, and therefore require therapeutic approaches that respect this reality.

Walking Together on the Healing Path (de-colonizing)

McCormick (2009) indicates that working in collaboration, rather than an integrative approach, is likely a better solution to helping and supporting our people on their healing path. McCormick (2009) warns against the integration of traditional healing and Western counselling practices because integration risks the potential for assimilation. This may not be the best or easiest solution because of the power differential between Western medicine and traditional healing. Western counselling may overpower traditional healing practices as Western counselling has the backing of the government, law, and medical organizations (McCormick, 2009).

An example of the medical model of wellness in the latest version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) clearly privileges a Western view of distress that does not fit with the AIAN view of distress (Cavalieri, 2013). Indigenous cosmologies or worldviews that include spirituality are a big part of AIAN peoples' beliefs around wellness and healing. There is no dualistic distinction made between animate, inanimate, human or non-human in our cosmology; all are connected and all make up a healthy holistic worldview (Cavalieri, 2013). I wonder how the DSM would assess our people who have dreams about their Ancestors that give them guidance on how to live their lives and that dreams having meaning to us.

McCormick (2009) suggests it is better to collaborate or work side by side in a complementary relationship with both practices. Cavalieri (2013) describes this collaboration as harmonizing where some parts of Western theory could work with traditional practices instead of being competitive. Because of the different worldviews of both approaches, it would be important to understand these differences to have an effective collaborative relationship

(McCormick, 2009). For our people to begin their healing there must be balance, self-transcendence, autonomy with their healing, and connectedness (McCormick, 2009).

Baskin (2011) agrees with McCormick on the idea of being cautious regarding our knowledge, such as traditional healing practices, being integrated into Western counselling and the fear of appropriation or misappropriation. When our spirituality is viewed as exotic, there is a risk of appropriation, especially when non-Aboriginal people conduct our sacred ceremonies. The substantiation of our knowledge, beliefs, and sacred practices should not result in losing ownership or control. Baskin (2011) points out there have been instances where non-Aboriginal people who have attended ceremonies or rituals take these practices to use as their own, inappropriately and without permission.

How do faculty, practitioners, and students in the helping field engage in ways of helping from an Aboriginal perspective? Baskin (2011) suggests professionals can help by focusing on worldviews and not on the culture or spiritual practices of our people. Worldviews are based on environment, land, challenges, community, causes of problems, and possible solutions which can be seen as universal to any culture. For non-Aboriginal helpers to use cultural or spiritual practices in their therapy, they need to be immersed into the culture by living and working where cultural and spiritual teaching is done (Baskin, 2011).

Baskin (2011) indicates that all people have spiritual, physical, emotional, and psychological needs, but each cultural group is unique in how they maintain the healing process or balance. For Aboriginal helpers, the onus is on us to protect the rituals and spiritual and ceremonial practices of our Ancestors and share our worldview with the larger society in our therapy work. The challenge of working in collaboration is that Western counselling practices are linear and our healing practices are holistic in their approaches (Baskin, 2011).

Our approaches to healing cannot be broken down into different topics like in the Western counselling perspective because in our worldview everything is connected (Baskin, 2011). For example, spirituality, values and holistic approaches are all part of the epistemology that our people teach, learn and practice (Baskin, 2011). Cavalieri (2013) concurs by pointing out that most traditional medicine people will not share their healing practices and spiritual beliefs with the outside world because it may be viewed as unusual or strange. Some of our healers indicate that they do not openly share discussions around spirituality. There are multiple reasons for the silence and some could be related to fear of appropriation. This may be one area of Indigenous life that has not been colonized, and therefore, our people want to protect it. Also, our people may not speak of or share our cultural beliefs around spirituality because it has been looked down on and devalued in the past and present (Cavalieri, 2013).

Duran & Duran (1995) believe it is possible for Western counselling practices to work with traditional healing practices through integration. If so, it may be conceivable to find a therapeutic practice that fits well for the healing of our people from the residential school trauma. Just as Sitting Bull kept an open mind about his encounters with white settlers, he encouraged his people to take from the white settlers what is good and make a good life for our children (Duran & Duran, 1995).

Although the idea of collaboration or integration is an option to support our people better on their healing path, some scholars believe our people need to use only traditional healing practices. Ross (2014) worries about the potential for what he calls “Pan-Indianism” (p. 265), where integration could lead to a generalized view of our people, cultures, and healing methods. Elders do not see integration as an idea that comes from our communities, and it is not part of local efforts for cultural restoration (Ross, 2014). McCormick (2009) points out that some clients

may choose traditional healing practices, mainstream counselling, or use a combination of both approaches in their healing.

Ross (2014) concurs with McCormick by saying not all of our people follow or believe in our healing practices. Some people may have a combination of beliefs that come from traditional and modern perspectives on healing. Regardless of the origins of the practice, they will gravitate towards what makes them feel better. Other people will take on anything that is remotely similar to our healing approaches to help them feel better. The point Ross (2014) makes is that some of our people will want only to use traditional healing, others may use a combination of various practices from different cultures, and there will be societal and cultural pressure in choosing. There can be no single way to the success in the healing of our people (Ross, 2014).

McCabe (2007) sees traditional healing practices as the best option in the treatment of our people because it reinforces feelings of self-worth. He believes our community has the necessary and appropriate means to healing ourselves by our strengths and knowledge instead of relying on outside practices that have been ineffective for most of our people. Mainstream treatment methods lack congruence with our healing practices (McCabe, 2007). McCabe (2007) indicates there are commonalities between Western counselling and traditional healing practices such as acceptance, genuineness, empathy, challenging client's beliefs and decisions, accessing the subconscious, and role modelling. However, in Western counselling practices these commonalities come from different theories and concepts whereas our practices are interconnected and we use all these methods. The main difference between Western and Indigenous healing approaches is that our healing practices follow a deeply mystical and spiritual experience that guides and influences our people from the Spirit World. An Aboriginal

psychotherapy technique developed from within our community may be the only way to create applicable and relevant mental health services for our people (McCabe, 2007).

Cavalieri (2013) believes psychotherapy needs to be situated with our people and based on a sovereign paradigm. Inherent sovereignty as defined by Cavalieri (2013) says “the most basic principle of all Indian law and means simply that the powers lawfully vested in an Indian tribe are those powers that predate New World discovery and have never been extinguished” (p. 26). This means that other nations will recognize that a particular tribe or society is bound by their common customs and language. Cavalieri (2013) broadens the idea of sovereignty to extend beyond the political and legal realm into the area of psychotherapy and the rights of our people to have a say in how we receive counselling. The ability of psychotherapy practices to work in collaboration with our societies to decide how we will be counselled would be a meaningful step forward for our people (Cavalieri, 2013).

AIAN populations seek psychotherapy about as often as the average White American, but usually, they do not have their needs adequately met (Cavalieri, 2013). Numerous scholars realize that part of the problem is that psychotherapy uses an indirect colonial approach. To acknowledge and recognize in any mental health work, our people need the resources and power to decide how their nations should proceed with their mental well-being, including developing their own research, theories, and psychotherapeutic model’s specific to their tribes. If Aboriginal sovereignty is stifled, then Western thinking will hold all the power and will continue to colonize our people just as Western researchers have by-passed our inherent right to question the researcher’s endeavour to collect data about our culture (Cavalieri, 2013).

The literature I reviewed on working with traditional healing and Western counseling practices agrees with the emphasis on collaboration rather than integration of traditional healing

practices (Gone, 2011; McCabe, 2008; McCormick, 1997b; Stewart, 2008; Twigg & Hengen, 2009). From the perspective of this researcher, even the word “integration” carries with it the connotation of a history where this word did more damage than good for our people. I am in agreement with the scholars regarding the need for collaboration rather than integration of traditional healing practices into mainstream counselling psychology. I believe what McCormick (2009) says about the process of collaboration and not integration. I can see that integrating traditional healing practices into mainstream counselling psychology could mean they would be overshadowed by the dominant cultures’ worldview and be lost or misinterpreted within counselling psychology.

All Our Relations - Interconnectedness

The literature generally agrees that the use of traditional healing approaches within counselling is critical for our people. Our peoples’ worldview about healing includes the need for interconnectedness by being connected not only to your nuclear family but your extended family and the entire community (Gone, 2013; McCabe, 2008; McCormick, 2005; McCormick, 2009; Stewart, 2008). This interconnectedness also extends to beliefs in the medicine wheel, which includes balance in the four directions and encompasses spiritual, emotional, physical, and mental aspects of healing (Gone, 2013; McCabe, 2008; McCormick, 2005; Twigg & Hengen, 2009). So what theories might work well for residential schools survivors from the family therapeutic perspective?

The following two studies indicate how focus and cognitive therapy are used in collaboration with traditional healing practices in family therapy. Thomas and Bellefeuille (2006) discuss how the use of focusing therapy and the traditional healing circle can complement each other. This empirical research looked at focusing therapy within the healing circle with a

group of First Nation people. This study includes six volunteers four male and two female between 25 to 65 years old, and all from Winnipeg Manitoba (Thomas & Bellefeuille, 2006). Most of the volunteers attended residential school. Their feedback about the healing circle with focusing therapy indicated this approach was beneficial to developing their spirituality (Thomas & Bellefeuille, 2006).

Heilbron and Guttman (2000) conducted an empirical study using cognitive therapy within a women's healing circle. The research took place on a reservation [actual location not given] and included three Ojibway and two non-First Nation women ranging in age between their mid-thirties to mid-forties. The results indicated that most of the women found this collaboration helpful in their healing journey because of the holistic approach (Heilbron & Guttman, 2000). Both of these studies indicate that inclusion of healing practices is vital to the proper support and healing for our people who seek counselling. The literature suggests that further empirical research is needed in this area. I believe the literature is saying mainstream counselling psychology must acknowledge, understand, and accept traditional healing practices.

Tafoya (1990) suggests our people theorize relationships with the core elements of family therapy including relationships, learning, teaching, and responsibility. One theory in family therapy that appears to complement our perspectives on healing is Michael White's Narrative therapy (Gehart, 2014). Narrative therapy takes a democratic stance that allows space for people to tell their story (Gehart, 2014). This approach is similar to the oral tradition of our people. Our people have been telling their story and history for generations as a way to hold and pass on our experiences, knowledge, and teachings.

Narrative therapy separates the person from their problem and sees problems as influenced by the dominant discourses in our lives. It looks to generate alternative and local

discourses (Gehart, 2014). Based on my experience in counselling our people, many see their problems as inherently a part of who they are and not separate from the self. Dominant discourses speak to the effects of colonization on our people and how it impacts the balance in the four directions (physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental). Local and alternative discourses speak to what works for you (Gehart, 2014) and for our people this is our cultural, spiritual beliefs, and worldview. Gehart (2014) talks of how narrative therapy solidifies new discourses by having them witnessed. In our culture, witnessing was very important in a number of ceremonies around rites of passage by bearing witness to a significant life transition.

Narrative therapy also works well with our people because this approach considers cultural norms and beliefs of marginalized groups (Gehart, 2014). Narrative therapy concepts are adaptable and allow for the collaboration of our beliefs and practices. This approach recognizes the importance of including traditional healers, tribal Elders, and leaders in the therapeutic process (Gehart, 2014). This recognition speaks to the respect for our beliefs and gives awareness to our worldview in traditional healing practices.

Lee (1997) warns against using a lot of psychological and technical terms or overwordiness as this can lead to issues of “lost in translation” for our people. A narrative approach, asks the client to use metaphors to tell his/her story. This process helps the therapist better understand the client’s current issues (Lee, 1997).

Bowen’s intergenerational therapy is another theory that could work in collaboration with traditional healing practices. This broad perspective approach looks at the evolution of human beings and the characteristics of all living things (Gehart, 2014). For our people, we have always seen ourselves as a part of the land, water, cosmos, and animals. We are all interconnected; just as the evolution of all living things have commonalities. Intergenerational therapy looks at the

key concept of differentiation, emotional, and relational systems using a genogram of three generations of a family (Gehart, 2014).

Intergenerational therapy is based on the three generations within a family and focuses on the emotional processes (Gehart, 2014). Many of our people are dealing with the effects of colonization and this concept correlates well with residential school survivors who have experienced intergenerational trauma. Bowen's intergenerational therapy speaks to intergenerational effects in the therapy process and fits well for our people in dealing with residential school trauma. Intergenerational therapy considers multi-generational patterns within families, such as depression, anger, conflict, substance abuse, parent-child, and couple relationships (Gehart, 2014). Because of the residential school experience and the breakdown of our social and cultural systems, our people are dealing with these multi-generational patterns.

The use of genograms with a family is a powerful tool, especially in teaching about the trauma residential school survivors experienced. Passing this information to the next generation will help them understand what happened to their grand/parents in these schools. Many residential school survivors refuse to speak of that time in their life with their children because of emotional reasons, such as shame and humiliation about the abuse they experienced (Morrissette, 1994). Using the genogram may help families deal with past experiences of abuse in a healthier way and bring them closer together.

Gehart (2014) cautions using this therapy approach with other cultures and points out that cultural norms set out in this theory may not fit with families from different cultures. For example, attachment theories and what is considered "normal" might be different in other cultures (Gehart, 2014). Other considerations when using the genogram with our people is the taboo around discussing the death of family members. Our people may not want to speak about

family members who passed on (Limb & Hodge, 2011). For example, our mother never spoke of our late brother by name, but when speaking about him, she would say “the son I loss”. One important consideration that Lee (1997) makes is the family system structure therapy model tends to see enmeshment as abnormal and encourages the separation of family members as healthy. This concept clearly goes against the interconnectedness our people see as important in healthy family and community relations (Lee, 1997).

When looking at the differences between traditional healing and Western counselling practices, there are more differences than commonalities. They are mainly due to hierarchical and linear approaches in Western methods compared to our holistic perspective. Lee (1997) points out that communication style plays a major role in how our people present themselves in therapy and this can be very different from the norms set out in Western perspectives. Direct eye contact in therapy is assessed by the therapist as the client paying attention, understanding, and being engaged (Lee, 1997). For our people, too much eye contact can be seen as disrespectful depending on whom you are speaking to (Lee, 1997). If your client is an Elder less eye contact is respectful. Appropriate eye contact is also dependent on the gender of your client or if your client is a child. As counsellors, we are taught to use a SOLAR (sit squarely, open posture, lean towards client, eye contact, and relax) approach when counselling clients but for our people sitting side by side with minimal or no eye contact might be more appropriate (Lee, 1997).

The oral patterns of our people also differ from the norm in family therapy as many of our people do not have a problem with silence and do not feel a need to fill in the silence with talk. For example, in cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) family therapists ask a lot of questions. Long pauses in conversation ranging anywhere from three to four seconds or longer are the norm for many of our people (Lee, 1997). When I worked in a hospital as a FNLW worker, I watched

a conversation between an elderly patient and a nurse. The nurse felt the need to fill in the conversation when there was a pause and assumed that the patient had finished her story when she had not. The patient's expression was obvious to me, but not to the nurse. The patient eventually shut down and stopped talking to the nurse, feeling the nurse was not listening to her anyways. Again, due to the traumatic effects of attending residential school many residential school survivors do not show a lot of emotional expressions because they were punished for showing emotions (Lee, 1997).

Another important factor in communications for our people is spirituality. It is rude to suddenly bring up discussions around spirituality (Lee, 1997). It is important to develop rapport with your client(s) before discussing issues around spirituality. Because our people have a holistic perspective in all areas of their life, everything is considered in relation to self (Lee, 1997). When this writer says a prayer to Creator, the prayer is always ended with saying "all my relations" which acknowledges the land, animals, cosmos, people, and the Ancestors from the past, present, and future.

An important point related directly to family therapy is how our people communicate and see our relationship with our family members. Most of us are protective of our family (Lee, 1997). When a family member does something wrong, it can be seen as a source of guilt and shame. Family members see it as disrespectful and shameful to talk in a negative way about a family member, and many will downplay or minimize the behavior. Problems within families are discussed with the therapist in a very indirect way by working up to the issue or problem at hand (Lee, 1997).

For our people, speaking with a non-Aboriginal therapist brings up issues around trust (Lee, 1997). Clients will not speak directly about a problem but approach the issue slowly over

time due to a lack of trust and a desire to test the therapist. Clients want to respect the counsellor's ability and see what the counsellor can figure out based on what the client is indirectly saying (Lee, 1997). Morrissette (1994) speaks of trust by saying "The process of a Native client initiating the healing relationship with a non-Native helper is, in itself, an enormous statement. The ability of the client to trust a helper from a culture who represents a painful past is extraordinary" (p 391).

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is clear that Western counselling and traditional healing practices come from different worldviews. Because Western counselling practices take a linear, hierarchical approach to healing, and traditional healing practices are grounded in a holistic approach, it makes for a very complex perspective when considering integration or collaboration. Some Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars believe that traditional healing practices should remain separate from mainstream counselling practices, and others believe collaboration or integration is possible.

Our people have a long history of intergenerational effects from residential schools that have left many of our people dealing with social issues. Mainstream counselling practices have, for the most part, failed to support our people on a healing path and many of our people have turned to traditional healing practices for support. I feel it is important always to consider working in collaboration with Western counselling practices, but to also keep in mind what will benefit our people first and foremost. It is a complex issue, and there are no easy answers or quick fixes in the healing of our people. Traditional healing practices were around before colonization, and they continue to exist after colonization. For most of our people, the impacts of colonization represent a significant part of their healing journey.

The literature reviewed indicates that a holistic traditional healing approach in collaboration with Western counselling perspectives works better for most of our people (Gone, 2013; McCabe, 2008; McCormick, 2009; Stewart, 2008; Twigg & Hengen, 2009). There is a consensus amongst the authors reviewed that further research is required (Thomas & Bellefeuille, 2006), specifically empirical research around traditional healing practices working in collaboration with counseling psychology (McCormick 2009; Stewart, 2008). The need for more research also solicits exploration into different geographical locations because our people's beliefs may vary within regions or tribes (McCabe, 2007).

In addition, further research should examine what non-First Nation counsellors need to be aware of when working with our people (Heilbron & Guttman, 2000; McCormick, 2009). McCormick (2009) suggests additional research is needed to explore the differences between the two practices and how collaboration can best be utilized with our population.

Chapter 3: Indigenous Ways of Knowing (Method)

Holistic Philosophy of Knowledge

When undertaking research, we must ask ourselves some questions about our beliefs around how we will conduct our inquiry. We need to ask ourselves, what is our knowledge system when we think about the philosophical assumptions regarding our research paradigm, ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology? I needed to base that on sound facts from the various knowledge philosophies I could use. What I learned and what I knew within myself was that what was needed to meet these philosophical assumptions was an Indigenous methodology.

I compared Western research paradigms and approaches with Indigenous paradigms and found it difficult to see the research within either qualitative or quantitative methodology. As Kovach (2009) indicates, an Indigenous methodology is based on Indigenous epistemology and tribal knowledge, and therefore it is not Western knowledge. To me, this suggests paradigms about ways of doing research come from different knowledge systems. Kovach (2010) discusses Indigenous knowledge as shown through our oral history by storytelling, remembering, talk story, re-storying, and yarning.

Archibald (2008) speaks of the importance of stories in our culture as a way to understand and gain insight into our lived experiences, and then to analytically reflect on these experiences. We need to know where we come from and what has influenced us so we can better understand who we are (Archibald, 2008). Richard Wagamese (2011) best describes the meaning of story for our people:

“We are all story. That’s what my people say. From the moment we enter this physical reality to the moment we depart again as spirit, we are energy moving forward to the fullest possible expression of ourselves. All the intrepid spirits who come to this reality make the same journey. In this we are joined. We are one. We

are, in the end, one story, one song, one spirit, one soul. This is what my people say” (p. 2).

Indigenous methodologies convey different meanings about how research is processed (Louis, 2007). Indigenous research is fluid and dynamic, with a focus on a cyclical and circular perspective.

Indigenous methodologies reflect our perspective and are respectful, sympathetic, and ethical. There are four principles to this methodology: 1) relational accountability, which means respect for all our relations, 2) respectful representation, which means in a non-Eurocentric way, 3) reciprocal appropriation, which means the research should benefit not just the researcher but also our people in the study, and 4) rights and regulations, which means following our protocols, specific goals, and outcomes (Louis, 2007). Respect, reverence, reciprocity, responsibility, interconnectedness, synergy, and holism are integral to using an Indigenous methodology (Archibald, 2008; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991).

Searching for ways of knowing

To choose an epistemology for this research, I needed to articulate what paradigm I subscribe to. It required a great deal of soul-searching to fully understand which epistemology fit with me and our tribal beliefs. According to Wilson (2008), the four dominant paradigms in Western research approaches: positivism, post-positivism, constructivism, and critical theory have one thing in common, which is the belief in individual knowledge. This perspective is very different from an Aboriginal paradigm (Wilson, 2008). Our knowledge paradigm rests on the assertion that knowledge belongs to the cosmos and as researchers, we interpret this knowledge (Wilson, 2008). Within our perspective of knowing, all knowledge is shared (Kovach, 2009).

Archibald (2008) speaks of storytelling as a form of research acquired by speaking with Elders who carry knowledge about culture, history, and experiences. I believe the most

appropriate research paradigm is an Indigenous paradigm that looks at Indigenous perspectives on epistemology, ontology, axiology, and methodology.

Indigenous epistemology is an important component of Indigenous methodological research (Louis, 2007). There is no distinct definition of Indigenous methodology since knowledge is not socially constructed based on how it is acquired, selected and stored, and how it is represented and communicated. Societies are distinguished by the strategies they use to comprehend their own places. Louis (2007) defines epistemology as a holistic approach to Indigenous knowledge and a spiritual journey. This spiritual journey comes from within the person and is accessed through ceremony (Louis, 2007).

Lavallee (2009) points out there are three ways of accessing our knowledge: empirical observation, traditional teachings, and revelation. Empirical observation is not qualitative inquiry, but it is seen as Indigenous empirical knowledge that represents the uniting of viewpoints from different entry points over time in actual situations and settings. Traditional knowledge or spiritual knowledge is the passing down of teaching through the generations and knowledge acquired through revelations, such as ceremony, dreams and intuition. This knowledge is also called “blood memory”, and it includes our beliefs, actions, and thoughts, which are passed on and carried in the blood of our Ancestors and the Spirit World (Lavallee, 2009, p. 22). As further described by Hovorka (2015), we carry our memories and preserve our Ancestors. Our belief in blood memory is grounded in genetic law. I believe this genetic law is the same as our belief in natural law. Our bloodlines and memories are tied to our genetics, and we carry them from one generation to the next at a cellular level. Just as the salmon know what to do, or baby turtles know how to survive without parents, our people carry our memories and ways of knowing within our bloodlines (Hovorka, 2015). This knowing is not learned in the

academic sense but is innate and a natural occurrence for our people. Hovorka (2015) suggests Western science has difficulties with this concept because there is no legitimate scientific proof. She challenges science by indicating it is important to 'believe to see versus see to believe' (Hovorka, 2015).

Creswell (2013) describes a researcher's ontology as 'what is reality and how do we see that reality'. Epistemology is about knowledge, how we acquire it, and what we believe about that knowledge (Creswell, 2013; Glesne, 2016). From an Indigenous perspective, both ontology and epistemology are closely connected and equal to each other, and therefore cannot be discussed as separate units within an Indigenous paradigm (Wilson, 2008).

I have always followed a holistic way of viewing the world as my reality. What is real to me exists through all my senses, including my sixth sense. I consider everything I feel from within me, to everything that comes to me externally. All things are living and breathing and have a spirit including animals, trees, plants, rivers, wind, fire; all that is Mother Earth. Reality extends to the cosmos because it is in the Spirit World where all our relations pass on to when they leave Mother Earth. This worldview is best described as a web or network in which all reality is interconnected (Kovach, 2009). I see myself as interrelated to all things on Mother Earth. Knowledge is reciprocal in nature and is something to be shared.

Glesne (2016) defines methodology as the way inquiry should proceed when doing research. Western methodology is described as evolving and inductive. The researcher's experience shapes the data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2013). From an Indigenous perspective, methodology proceeds from a holistic, all-encompassing viewpoint (Kovach, 2009). Archibald (2008) describes holism as an Indigenous philosophical concept that refers to interrelatedness between the spiritual, intellectual, physical, and emotional spheres to create a

whole healthy human being. Holism extends to and is shaped by family, friends, community, tribe, and nation. Many tribes use a circle to represent balance, completeness, wholeness, and wellness (Archibald, 2008). How I acquire and interpret knowledge is based on this holistic perception.

Knowledge can come from my dreams, people, animals, stories, rivers, and my Ancestors (past, present and future). When I reflect on my past and how I acquire knowledge, I see an interconnection. From the time I was a small child listening to our father tell us stories by a campfire in our traditional territory, I have gathered knowledge. These stories are of our history, culture, beliefs, and where we come from as human beings. These stories helped us to understand better who we are, what we believe, and how to live our lives. They were the very essence of how we came to know. I have dreams that give me messages and direction on how to live my life in a good, holistic and balanced way. I follow the teachings around the medicine wheel to acquire knowledge in a balanced fashion, always keeping in mind the physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental aspects. Archibald (2008) states “ways of acquiring knowledge and codes of behavior are essential and are embedded in cultural practices; one practice that plays a key role in the oral tradition is storytelling” (p. 11).

Axiology, or relational accountability, is the values that researchers bring into their work (Creswell, 2013; Wilson, 2008). Value judgements concerning validity, what is right or wrong, statistically relevant, and what is un/worthy are not considered when it comes to axiology for Indigenous knowledge (Wilson, 2008). Importance and meaning are placed on accountability to your relations and developing relationships within research (Wilson, 2008). Kovach (2009) describes our responsibility this way:

Research is about collective responsibility: ‘we can only go so far before we see a face – our Elder cleaning fish, our sister living on the edge in East Vancouver...- and hear a voice whispering, “Are you helping us?”’ (p. 36).

When our people speak of all our relations we are talking of virtually everything on Mother Earth and in the cosmos past and present (Wilson, 2008). This is an important aspect of our ethical responsibility to ensure that our knowledge and people are not exploited (Kovach, 2009).

I have always believed I am accountable to all our relations, those that are still here on Mother Earth and those that have passed on. I believe in respect, reciprocity, and responsibility in everything I do. In deciding to return to academia to pursue an undergraduate and graduate degree, my reasons focused on wanting to support and help our community with the education I received. I supported and helped from a place of respect, responsibility, and reciprocity. As I prepared to do my master’s thesis, I felt I needed to hold on to these values out of respect for all our relations.

Indigenizing the Research

In setting out on the right path in this research project, I respond to questions about why and how these approaches are best for me in doing this research. The question that comes to mind is: why would I use a Westernized colonial approach to doing research with our people? As Smith (2012) says “the ways in which scientific research is implicated in the worst excesses of colonialism remains a powerful remembered history for many of the world’s colonized peoples” (p. 1). The very word “research” is seen by most Indigenous populations as the dirtiest word in the English language and brings up feelings of distrust and bad memories of the past that are not forgotten (Smith, 2012). Westernized research approaches are more scientific and linear in nature (Kovach, 2009) and they do not consider the cosmos (Wilson, 2008).

This research requires me to be responsible in how I interact with our people and culture. With the knowledge I have, it is natural to choose an approach that fits well with the storytellers. To fully understand and convey the research in a holistic, respectful, and reciprocal way, it is my responsibility to use an Indigenous methodology. The fact that I am conducting research with our people regarding their experiences of colonization, I believe I would be no better than the earlier colonizers that used Western positivist perspectives to study our people in the past.

Kovach (2009) points out that in doing Indigenous research, researchers need to step away from the Western paradigm and no longer depend on this approach for our research. We can no longer hold an Indigenous perspective within the confines of a non-Indigenous paradigm. Our research is relational because the very nature of it is a holistic perspective that involves personal preparation including observation, inspiration, reasons, self-awareness, and how the researcher sees him/herself in relation to the research. Our perspective takes a subjective and holistic approach; the journey is personal, and experiences with our storytellers and the research is relational (Kovach, 2009).

Archibald (2008) speaks of interrelatedness as key to our research, and the value in developing a close relationship with yourself and the participant. It is important to relate to the storyteller, the story, and your personal experiences as the listener [researcher]. Part of doing respectful research is to limit questions of storytellers and focus on listening well. As researchers, we may have questions, but if we listen carefully to the story and trust the process the answers we are looking for may emerge. Storytellers have autonomy about what information they choose to give or withhold based on what they feel I need to know. Asking too many questions implies a need for control over the conversation or process. The academy teaches the

opposite of this by presenting knowledge as objective; the student is not encouraged to relate to knowledge on a personal level (Archibald, 2008).

As Lavallee (2009) points out Indigenous methodologies are not objective, and they are far from being unbiased. Therefore, is impossible for the researcher to be objective because the researcher is connected to the storytellers and collectively we are connected to all living things. This is interconnectedness. As researchers, we are connected through our emotions and thoughts; both fuel each other and are a part of the entire process (Lavallee, 2009).

As a researcher, I know I am connected to this research on a personal and subjective level. I am a part of this research just as I am aware I am part of the land, water, sky, cosmos, and all our relations. My emotions, heart, and spirit are the driving force behind this research, and as each storyteller shares in this journey, I see them as the holders of knowledge.

A storytelling method considers the oral traditions of our people and gives them an opportunity to tell their story in their own words. For our people, telling our story is important because we come from an oral tradition; this is how we express ourselves, tell about our journeys, and pass on knowledge to others within our culture. When I do research, I see how sitting with storytellers and hearing their stories about their healing journey are very personal and it is important for me to convey this information as it was received. I must keep in mind that their stories do not belong to me and how I convey their stories to others is my responsibility based on the way it was time-honored.

In conclusion, this research is grounded in Indigenous knowledge systems and philosophy of science and was conducted in a respectful, reciprocal, and responsible way. As Wilson (2008) points out, an Indigenous paradigm increases the chances that research will be enriching to Aboriginal lives and not a source of disparagement or depletion.

Community Values – Working Together

As a part of the research process, I felt it was important for me to connect with our community and discuss the proposed research with community members. The purpose in doing this was to connect with potential storytellers, resources, and to “test the waters” to see how open our people would be to taking part in this research with me. What I discovered was people from our community were more than willing to offer me guidance and support in doing this research. Many were proud of me and felt this was important for our community.

The values that came forth were patience, respect, listening, keeping an open mind, and heart (R. Tetlichi, personal communication, August 13, 2015). Autonomy over the research was also important in our community (N. Jack, personal communication, August 24, 2015). A value that stood out was concern for me, and that self-care was an important part of the research process. Particular attention was given to look at myself with respect and care (R. Tetlichi, personal communication, August 13, 2015). I need to focus on the good things in life, what people are saying, and to learn from the teachings I receive from the stories. I should know what to say about myself and others as a way to support our people (R. Tetlichi, personal communication, August 13, 2015). It is important to be grateful for each day I have and to treat people as I would want to be treated (D. Allen, personal communication, August 15, 2015).

When our people see something, they relate what they see to what they feel; they experience it, want to experience it, and work to experience it so they can understand it better (R. Tetlichi, personal communication, August 13, 2015). It is how we look after ourselves and heal from what has happened in the past (R. Tetlichi, personal communication, August 13, 2015). I think this also speaks to how personal this journey is not only for the storytellers but also for me, the researcher – interconnectedness. I was cautioned not to take on the pain of others as they told

me their story (N. Jack, personal communication, August 24, 2015). When you work with our people, you need to work with everything: mind, body, spirit, and emotion (R. Tetlich, personal communication, August 13, 2015).

My self-care became an integral part of the research process, and I looked after my emotional, spiritual, physical, and mental health. I spent time praying to Creator, talking to the Ancestors, asking for guidance and support with every story shared with me. I knew I was not alone on this research journey, and this gave me the strength to continue. I knew I was doing a good thing, and there was a lot of meaning and heart attached to this work. I smudged before or after I heard each story, and I took the time to journal my thoughts and feelings on hearing their healing stories. I kept in mind these were not my stories, and ensured that I did not carry the pain the storytellers experienced on their journeys. Self-care included spending as much time as I could on the land, being close to the water, trees, animals, campfire, wind, rain, sun, moon, and just being in that moment, fully present. I could feel all my relations around me, and this was warm and comforting to me. I got plenty of rest, good food, and exercise on a regular basis. When I explained my research process to others, I was always given support, encouragement, and accolades for the work I was doing. Many people thought I was doing important work, and this certainly encouraged me to continue and do the best I could – it made me feel good.

Invitation

The invitation process was very informal and I used “moccasin telegram” (word of mouth) to find storytellers. This is a method I am familiar with and has been used by our community long before modern communication. Before this, when I returned home in August 2015 to do my consultation I was given many names of people who would be good resources and storytellers. When I began conducting the research in August 2016, I made phone calls and left

messages asking potential storytellers to contact me. Once contact was made, I explained by phone the highlights of the research. If he/she was willing to meet with me, I provided more detail via the Letter of First Contact (see Appendix C) and verbal explanation. I answered questions from potential storytellers. I explained the issues around confidentiality and the need to sign a consent form (see Appendix D). The options for the consent form were for storytellers to remain anonymous or have their name published in the research, and if they wished to be contacted for follow-up or further research. Of the nine storytellers, one wished to remain anonymous. For every contact I made with a possible storyteller, I noted the date and time and what transpired during this connection. Once the storyteller agreed to partake in the research, we set aside a time and place for the storytelling.

There were nine storytellers, four men and five women. Presently we have fifteen nations in the Yukon Territory spread across the entire territory. Getting representation from each nation was beyond the scope of this master's thesis. Of the fifteen nations, I recruited storytellers from seven nations and I made every effort to have storytellers from the different nations. I did not have a complete representative sample for this research, but this research is open to further study by other scholars or me. My research is not a gender specific or gender balanced analysis. I invited storytellers who were open and willing, and who met the inclusion criteria. I did, however, make every attempt to have gender balance, so I kept this in mind as I invited storytellers.

Storytellers and teachers

This methodology uses the term “storytellers and teachers” in place of the Western research term “participants” to reflect Indigenous epistemologies and approaches inherent in story work. Storytellers are residential school survivors between the ages of sixty-two and

seventy-seven years old who self-identified as actively working on their healing. All storytellers were maintaining their healing through reconnection with themselves, family, friends, and community. Healing was defined as storytellers who are sober, non-violent, mentally well, and collectively respected.

The study location was in the unceded traditional territory of the Southern Tutchone and Kaska people which is now known as a part of the Yukon. Storytellers were from the following traditional territories: Tlingit, Kaska, Northern and Southern Tutchone, (See Appendix F).

As a research site, I chose the traditional territories of our Ancestors because I wanted to do research with the people I will be serving as a counsellor. Most of the research occurred in the unceded traditional territory of the Southern Tutchone people. There are other tribes also living within this traditional territory, so some storytellers were from neighbouring regions. Research using an Indigenous methodology has not been done in our traditional territory. It has not been done in any methodology for the academy. Our people may have been researching it on their own apart from the academy.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

For the research, storytellers were people interested in partaking in the research process and who met the study criteria. To ensure they met the criteria, I asked storytellers questions and took into account what I already knew about storytellers from others [family, community, extended family, and friends] or my personal knowledge and experience with the storytellers. All storytellers were given an informed choice, and they understood what was being asked of them.

Storyteller inclusion was based on residential school attendance, living a healthy lifestyle, (e.g. maintaining balance - mental, emotional, physical and spiritual), articulate, respectful, supportive/contribution to community, encouraging of research, willingness to help develop

research and give permission to record their story, as well as provide guidance and educate the researcher.

Exclusion criteria was based on non-attendance at a residential school, early stages of substance recovery and beginning their healing, not supportive of research, too difficult for storyteller to tell story (re-traumatization), denied permission to record story, potential to harm other(s) by inclusion of people in their stories without permission of other(s), and not able to recount story accurately due to cognitive condition(s) (e.g. dementia).

The storytellers had the option at any time to change their mind and decide not to be a part of the research. No storytellers terminated their participation thus far, but they are aware they can at any time without explanation. Any gifts given to storytellers are kept regardless of their choice to terminate participation. Not all potential storytellers agreed to be a part of this research, and I let them know it was okay to say no without further explanation. I feel even if their knowledge was not used for this research, the time they set aside to tell me their story needed to be reciprocated in some way. I feel I still had an enriched experience in hearing their story, which will enhance my learning. All stories collected from each of the storytellers was given back to the storytellers to do with as they wish.

What I Hoped to Learn

To begin the research process with storytellers, I offered some explanation and inspiration as a starting point for them telling their story. Just as when I started the process of making a button blanket, I searched for ideas within and outside of me to find my meanings based on the knowledge I had uncovered. The questions pursued in this research were: What supported residential school survivors to put them on their healing path?, Did they get support from Western counselling practices?, Did they use traditional Aboriginal healing practices?, Did

they use a combination of both Western, and Traditional healing practices?, and Were there other circumstances that supported them on their healing path?.

Our healing stories

I collected the stories using a combination of my field notes and audio recordings of the storyteller's stories. To ensure I was not disrespectful, I asked permission to take notes while they told their stories. All the storytellers were fine with me taking field notes as they talked. By generating the field notes, I was able to ask questions at the end of their stories to gain clarity. At the conclusion of each storytelling session I would process what I learned from their stories and make further notes. I also made personal notes about my thoughts and feelings in a separate journal, which allowed me to debrief my experiences as the listener.

Storytellers chose where they would tell me their stories. Some asked for a specific place, and others left it up to me to decide where we met. We met at their homes, college classroom, and cultural centre. Mostly, we met at the college at "Théezoá" outdoor camp located behind the college. All locations seemed ideal and fit with the storytelling process by the connections to our land, culture, and spirituality.

I considered confidentiality and ethics because I researched what the Behavioral Research Ethics Board (BREB) calls "human subjects" but I call "our people", and I defined these issues through the eyes of the storytellers so that I respected our beliefs about confidentiality and ethics. Absolon (2011) says "our principles and ethics as Indigenous people set us apart from Western researchers. Essentially, the worldviews and principles of Indigenous re-search are embedded in the methodologies themselves" (p. 63).

I did respectfully ask to do the research with each storyteller this was done with a sense of humility and humbleness. Informed consent was secured by providing storytellers with a

verbal definition and explanation of the consent form. Once explained, I allowed storytellers the opportunity to read over the consent form before signing. I advised storytellers to let me know if they had any questions or concerns with the form. If they were unsatisfied with my explanation or I could not answer a question I advised them that they were entitled to speak with the principle investigator.

Epistemological humility is being a part of the research process by participating in ceremony, rituals and offering of gifts for the knowledge I received (Absolon, 2011). There was an openness that allowed all storytellers to decide if they wanted to participate in ceremony, such as a smudge or prayer. I provided all storytellers with the opportunity to smudge and/or pray, some chose to smudge or pray while others went right into telling their story. Lavallee (2009) does caution that some storytellers may not be familiar or comfortable with traditional protocols or ceremony because colonization was very effective in assimilating many of our people. For some storytellers, partaking in these protocols may not be comfortable or understandable to them, and they may refuse. Storytellers decided for themselves what they choose to be involved in within the research process and I respected their choice. Due to colonization, some of our people have developed feelings of shame about our culture or because they lack cultural knowledge (Lavallee, 2009). I found that all storytellers were very clear on what they wanted to partake in regarding ceremony and none asked for an explanation or understanding of the ceremonies offered. I was respectful to recognize that not all storytellers may follow a traditional Indigenous ceremony so I advised I was open to what they wanted to do regarding their own spiritual beliefs.

To maintain balance in the research process I needed to give back to the storytellers and I did offer gifts as dictated by protocols around sharing of knowledge (N. Jack, personal

communication, August 24, 2015). R. Tetlich (personal communication, August 13, 2015) indicates that gift giving is required and proper protocol when asking someone to share their knowledge with you. The principle of reciprocity is a part of gift giving and when storytellers share their knowledge with you this is the gift they give you (Lavalley, 2009).

All storytellers were given a gift at the beginning of their storytelling. The gifts varied and included items such as beads, tobacco, food, books, candles, plates, tea towels, clothing, and/or coffee/tea. Depending on location and situation, I offered food to storytellers including coffee, tea, water, sandwiches, fruit, and veggies. Some storytellers were focused on telling their story and declined the food, while other times I chose not to offer food because of time constraints. Other storytellers told me their schedule was busy, so I wanted to respect their time. Refreshments were offered at the beginning of the storytelling when the storyteller was finished, I provided food for both of us to eat. This allowed for us to visit and talk further about the research or whatever we felt like discussing. Most storytellers welcomed the refreshments and the food. Protocols need to be in place to carry out activities or methods that respect our people and worldview (Kovach, 2010).

All the Indigenous scholars and researchers discuss the idea of giving back or gift giving as a part of the reciprocal protocol imbedded in our way of acquiring knowledge from Elders, storytellers, and community (Absolon, 2011; Archibald, 2008; Kovach; 2009; Lavalley, 2009; Wilson, 2008). I am familiar with this protocol from our Tlingit and Northern Tutchone culture; giving back or gift giving is a central part of the potlatch ceremony. As R. Tetlich (personal communication, August 13, 2015) points out, in our community one does not get something for nothing, you always have to give thanks by giving back.

When all the recorded storytelling sessions were complete, I had the recordings transcribed into hard copy notes. I solicited the support of an Indigenous transcriber because it was important that the transcriber understood and got the nuances and innuendoes particular to our Indigenous ways of storytelling. I reviewed the transcriptions while listening to the recordings to ensure accuracy and all inferences (e.g. pauses, sighs, laughing, etc.) were included in the transcription. I also corrected any transcription errors in names and places. Storytellers received copies of their recorded story. I asked for feedback and if they wish to add, change, delete or correct any part of the information. Giving copies of recordings and transcripts to storytellers is important and it ensures that copyright remains with storytellers (Archibald, 2008). Should there be any disagreements, misunderstandings or misinterpretations in the research from our communities, I will rectify this matter as needed. Copies were given to all the storytellers in person or sent by registered mailed via the postal office. Storytellers were given approximately two weeks to provide any feedback, and three storytellers provided feedback. I met with the three storytellers that gave me feedback and changes were completed before I began to organize and present the stories in this document.

Listening with my three ears:

My listening process happened on three different occasions. First, when I sat with storytellers to hear their story, the second time when I sat down to go over their written stories with their audio recordings, and finally when I read through their stories for meaning making. All these occasions had significance in the research process, and I listened with my ears, heart, mind, and observed with my eyes.

When I first heard their stories, I know I was listening with my ears, mind, and I observed their facial expressions and body language. I could feel their energy around me as they told me

their stories, and I could sense their change in tone depending on where they were in their story. I was fully present with storytellers as they told their stories. The second time I listened to their audio recorded stories was while looking at written copies. To hear their voices brought me back to when I first heard their stories. I reminisced about being back in the time and place as the story was told and I could see their faces as I heard their recorded voices. It was not until the third time when I sat down to read their stories did I truly understand what listening with your three ears meant. I was entrenched in their story and I could see and feel what they were saying. Similar to watching a motion picture, I was with them as an observer and witness to their stories of their healing journeys. I listened completely with my heart and my eyes as a gateway to making meaning of their stories.

The importance of listening well means listening with your three ears: your heart and your two ears (Archibald, 2008). R. Tetlich (personal communication, August 13, 2015) echoes the need to listen and ask if you can interrupt with a question(s) or should you wait until the end of the story. Along with respectful listening, the listener also needs to show patience by keeping an open heart and mind (R. Tetlich, personal communication, August 13, 2015).

Blazing the trail

- August 2015
 - Network and make connections with our community.
- Sept 2015 – March 2016
 - Develop thesis proposal: introduction, literature review and methodology. Choose thesis committee members.
- April 2016 – July 2016
 - Thesis proposal defence. Ethics Board Application process.
- August 2016
 - Gather data from storytellers.

- Sept 2016 – May 2017
 - Gather/organize/meaning making, write thesis paper.
- July 2017 – Thesis defense

Storytelling in balance

In keeping with the storytelling tradition, I had to step away from colonial influences by decolonizing myself and look at the research about how storytelling played a role in our cultural ways of knowing. As indicated by Archibald (2008) I also started with respect as I looked at the cultural knowledge embedded in the stories, and I had the utmost respect for the storytellers in this research. I had to connect to the storyteller as a listener, setting aside any objectivity and immersing self into the story as it was told. The approach I took to collecting data involved listening rather than asking a set of structured interview questions. The most I asked of the storytellers was to simply tell me the story of their healing journey. I allowed storytellers the freedom to express their journey as they wished. I used a visual to stimulate the healing stories. I used the diagram “Who Am I” (see Appendix B) to stimulate the healing stories. “Who am I” is by Mohawk Elder Sylvia Maracle found in Anderson’s 2016 text “A Recognition of Being: Reconstructing Native Womanhood”. It allowed female and male storytellers to discover their meaning-making based on our cultural beliefs. The emphasis of Anderson’s book is looking at the colonizing effects on our people and how we have lost our balance as a society. The purpose of the circle was to assist storytellers to engage this perspective as they told their story.

To introduce this circle and set the tone, I began by briefly sharing my healing story. I asked storytellers to begin to think about the questions in the circle including Who are you not?, Looking back...where have I come from?, Where is my healing path leading me?, and What responsibilities do I have to myself, to our culture and people? I started by using myself as an

example. I placed myself on the “Who Am I” diagram and shared how I started my healing journey and how I thought about and answered these questions. Most of the storytellers found this helpful, and I could see they were getting the purpose of the “Who Am I” diagram and how to apply to it to themselves and their own healing. I told the storytellers the diagram is just one way of beginning their stories, and it is a tool to get them thinking about how they would like to start. If the storyteller had an idea about how to start, I let them proceed as they wished. I found I had to be cautious with the explanation of the “Who Am I” diagram so I was not directing or steering them in a direction that would benefit the research outcome. I wanted the storytelling process to be genuine and told in such a way that what I was witnessing and hearing was what I needed to know for the research. The storytellers were free to go in any direction and determine the information they believed I needed to know. I had trust and faith in the storytellers to direct the research, as per the principles of Archibald’s (2008) storywork approach.

Ethics

Even though I am an Indigenous researcher and I conducted the research in an Indigenous methodology, I was aware that I could still be seen as an “outsider” who came into the communities from a Western university to study our people. I do believe as an Indigenous person I experienced some leniency and trust, but suspicion veils all research. As I think back on my experience with our people, and when I presented the research, I do not believe this was an issue.

As part of doing research within the academy, I was required to make an application to the University of British Columbia Research Ethics Board to obtain approval in conducting research with our people. My research was with our people who have been failed by multiple systems and who are survivors of the effects of colonization and residential school trauma. Storytellers discussed issues in their past that could have triggered strong emotions, and leave

them open to re-traumatization but based on my observations and feedback all storytellers did well. I checked in with all storytellers during and after their storytelling, and I noted no adverse effects. All storytellers indicated that they were able to speak about their past and their healing journey because they had worked on their healing therefore talking with me did not create triggers. Most storytellers indicated that talking about their experience was an intricate part of their healing and therefore further discussions did not affect them as they did when they were new to their healing journey. As a researcher and counsellor, I had strong supports and resources in place. I advised storytellers that I would be more than willing to offer them professional resources from within the community should they need extra supports (See Appendix E). I honestly felt and still believe that the storytellers had no adverse effects from their storytelling experience. I ensured that I followed up with all storytellers to confirm they are doing well after they shared their stories. Because of the subjective and personal nature of the research, I did not see myself doing anything less than this to ensure storytellers were doing well long after completing the research.

I need to ensure that I share research findings with storytellers by presenting the findings in a clear, concise, respectful, and understandable manner. The use of plain language instead of technical jargon is important when communicating (Archibald, 2008; D. Allen, personal communication, August 15, 2015; N. Jack, personal communication, August 24, 2015; & R. Tetlich, personal communication, August 13, 2015).

Archibald (2008) indicates there is a fine line between asking questions and being a nuisance. The Western ways of asking permission, signing documents and rechecking for accuracy can be seen as the researcher not getting it right or that the researcher does not trust

what the storyteller has said (Archibald, 2008). I continued to communicate with the storytellers, and I was able to hear responses from three storytellers which continue to shape my work.

Holders of the stories

Copyright of the stories belongs to the storytellers who shared their experiences. They do not belong to the University of British Columbia or me. The University of British Columbia recognizes that thesis copyright belongs to the student, but the student is required to allow the publication of the thesis in their library data base cIRClE (The University of British Columbia, 2017). Further, the university library, archives and libraries Canada will submit a student's thesis on the internet and searchable databases allowing access to anyone. Students retain copyright but have given "non-exclusive" use to the university library and Canadian archives and libraries (The University of British Columbia, 2017). Within the Canadian Constitution of 1867 amendments in 1982 resulted in section 35 which addresses Aboriginal rights in Canada (Comparative Constitution Project, 2017). Section 35 does not give a clear definition of what those rights include but does point out that land claims are a part of our rights as a people (Comparative Constitution Project, 2017). I know within the Yukon the Land claims agreements have been settled with most of our people and included in our right is our history, culture, beliefs, knowledge, and land entitlements. Respectful Indigenous research speaks to autonomy, and I honored our belief in autonomy by returning the research to the storytellers – they are the rightful owners of the knowledge they have shared.

I will ensure that storytellers receive a published copy of the final version of this manuscript as a gift and acknowledgement of their sharing. I want the storytellers to know that this research would not be possible if it were not for their support, openness, trust, and faith in me. To honour them, I must return copies of this document back to the storytellers. This tradition

is part of tribal law and our protocols around stories. This is knowledge that should be shared and accepted as a way of knowing.

Meaning making

The stories were grouped into themes and ideas based on finding the story within the story, my reactions and responses to the stories within the stories, “I” poems, and the three laws (Creator’s, natural, and tribal law). In following an Indigenous methodology, I use the term meaning-making to discuss what would be called “themes, ideas or data analysis” in Western research. Storytellers might see Western approaches as someone else’s rules and expect me to do the best I can in the best way I know how (Archibald, 2008). I believe I did the best I could with what I know and with the guidance of the storytellers and the knowledge they carry.

For each story, I looked for the story within the story by sorting the entire story into segments that contributed to the entire story. This process is similar to making a button blanket based on design meaning and how that meaning will be expressed on the blanket and the contributing parts that will make up the entire blanket. There is a story to each part of the button blanket that contributes to the entire significance of the blanket. Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg and Bertsch (2003) describe this process as listening for the plot of the story in the story. This two-part process includes listening for the plot and the listener’s response to the story. To begin, the listener needs to get a sense of location or a lay of the land through identification of the stories being told, like what is going on - the when, why, where, and with who. As listener you listen for any themes or metaphors, what is not expressed, and absences or contradictions within the story. Identification of the larger social context of the story is experienced by the connection between storyteller and listener at a social and cultural level (Gilligan et al., 2003).

The second part is for the listener to include their thoughts and responses to the stories they witness by identifying any reactions, feelings, and relational connections with the storyteller (Gilligan, et al., 2003). As researchers using an Indigenous methodology, we are not able to remain completely objective observers or listeners; we become involved within the story and pay attention from a personal perspective. In essence, we walk with the person on their storytelling journey, and on some level we experience what the storyteller is telling us. Reflexivity is crucial to the listening process. We interact with the storyteller on a personal level through our values, interests, beliefs and kinship. As we read the story, we pay attention to our emotional responses by noting when we feel or do not feel a connection with the storyteller. We note what touches our heart, the thoughts and feelings that emerge, why we respond this way and the effect this will have on how we view the storyteller and their story (Gilligan, et al., 2003). In essence, we listen with our three ears - our two ears and our heart (Archibald, 2008). To connect the heart and the mind as a listener allows us to make meaning from the story because some stories may not always be explicit or explained by the storyteller (Archibald, 2008).

The second phase of the listening process is to listen to the “I poems” within the story (Gilligan, et al., 2003). As we read through the story for a second time, we find all the places in the story where the storyteller uses “I”, such as ‘I said’, ‘I did’, ‘I was’, ‘I could’, ‘I heard’, ‘I thought’, ‘I don’t know’, ‘I think’, ‘I am’, etc. These are noted, highlighted and pulled out of the story and written down in a sequence as the story unfolds. The purpose is to pay attention to the storyteller’s voice such as the tone, pitch or strength, and tempo. We listen for emotional responses such as happiness, sadness, fear, uncertainty, and change in the tone of the storyteller’s voice. Listen for when the storyteller speaks from the heart, or uses a lot of action or movement

such as saying several times ‘I thought’ or ‘I think’, or taking action by saying ‘I did’, ‘I told’, ‘I said’, ‘I got’, etc., (Gilligan, et al., 2003).

The next step in the “I poems” is to listen for how the storyteller speaks of him/herself and how they know who they are (Gilligan, et al., 2003). By placing the listener in a relationship with the storyteller, the listener cannot be objective or distant. This step is crucial in understanding in a relational way. As the storyteller speaks of their personal experiences and the journey from past to present, the listener develops a close connection or bond. For example, when the storyteller speaks of a singular experience of how they saw themselves or what their feelings were and how the listener relates to the storyteller’s experience (Gilligan, et al., 2003).

Throughout the listening process, I also listened for when the three laws of our people, Creator, natural and tribal law, were incorporated into the storytelling process. This phase was suggested by William when I had asked the storytellers if they had suggestions or ideas of how I should proceed with interpreting the stories. William explained that all three laws are a part of the interconnectedness and social structure of our culture, beliefs, and ways of knowing. Creator’s law focuses on the personal and spiritual connection we all have with Creator. This law is grounded in the spiritual journey, and we all need to work toward this on our own. Within Creator’s law, there are ten laws for men and five laws for women. The natural law is the law for all of nature including the universe, animals, land, water, sky, trees, human beings, sun, moon, stars and all the way down to the smallest living creatures. How we live in harmony, connect and have respect for and with each other is at the heart of this law. Tribal law is the law that tells us how we should govern and conduct ourselves within our nations. This law speaks to our potlatch system, gender protocols, clan systems, matriarchal structure, family names, and our status or wealth within our tribes. All of these laws are interconnected, overlap with each other, and are

woven together like our cedar hats. There can be rippling effects like waves on a lake. If one law is broken the other laws are also bound to be affected in some way.

I did not realize until William explained these laws that I had heard them before. They were just not described as natural, tribal and Creator's laws. I was trained in these laws by my parents. They are interwoven into our ways of knowing and being. I believe these laws have been around since time immemorial. Because they come from our oral history, it is highly unlikely we will find them written down or recorded. Just as our spiritual practices have remained sacred, I believe these laws are what was verbally passed down from one generation to the next. On some level I would speculate that these laws are a part of our blood memory and can be passed down through our genetic memory without having to be taught to us.

An example story of my father and my mother teaching me these laws comes from my early twenties. I was out hunting with my father and at the time I was familiar with the protocols of women who go on the hunt. My mother had always talked to me about how I should conduct and present myself, and the boundaries of these protocols. My father had harvested a moose, and I was helping him cut up the moose. I was so focused on what I was doing that I did not realize I had done something wrong. When we got home my father spoke to my mother, and she pulled me aside and spoke about my inappropriate action. I had stepped over the blood of the moose instead of walking around. This resulted in disrespecting and breaking our tribal law that sets out gender protocols. I broke the natural law by not respecting the harvested moose, and I brought shame to myself and my father in the eyes of Creator.

Chapter 4: Reconnecting with our Traditional Healing - Findings

I engaged in this research to learn from our residential school survivors about how they defined healing from their experience. I used an Indigenous methodology, and I present this work from a holistic, interconnected way of knowing about healing. While generating this research I was also making a button blanket. There are times when I metaphorically relate the making of a button blanket to the stories presented by the storytellers. Each story is interconnected and relational just as the various aspects of the button blanket make up a whole meaning. I hope this interconnection will help answer my questions:

- What supported residential school survivors to put them on their healing path?
- Did they get support from Western counselling practices?
- Did they use traditional Aboriginal healing practices?
- Did they use a combination of both Western, and Traditional healing practices?
- Were there other circumstances that supported them on their healing path?

Story 1: Roger's Story

Roger is a member of the Wolf clan and he is Northern Tutchone situated in the unceded traditional territory of the Han speaking people from the Yukon. Roger was six years old when he was taken from his parent's home in [xxxx] and sent to residential school in [xxxx], Yukon. He remained there for nine years. He was given a number which he still remembers to this day; it is seventy-three. Roger describes his residential school experience as horrific and shocking. Once out of the school, Roger says his life was filled with a lot of hate and anger. He got into many fights and showed virtually no other emotions. Roger lived on the streets in Alberta and learned to survive by stealing. He recalls standing at his son's grave and being asked why he was showing no emotions or tears. Roger wondered why they were questioning him. In his mind, and

what he had learned at residential schools, was that he was a man and men did not cry. He said holding back all that pain, was the hardest thing he ever did in his life. Roger eventually went to treatment, and it was there he discovered just how much he was affected by his experience in residential school.

As I looked for his story within the story, a crucial part of his healing was opening the door to his emotions and letting go by talking about his experience. The door opened up to his healing by bringing forth his anger, and he talked about what happened to him, he did this in a circle, he describes this:

They asked me to talk about my story so I sat in the middle of the cushions there and then I started talking and I could feel the anger and he [counsellor] said just let it go, just keep going. He said if you get angry just beat on those pillows and all I remember was just getting angry, and I was just starting to yell and curse and then I blacked out.

People in the circle told Roger what happened when he blacked out:

You were down there for a good half an hour, beating, cussing, yelling and swearing and everything and just puking your guts out.

He goes on to describe how he felt after this experience by saying:

I'm just physically drained, mentally, and physically and he [counsellor] said yeah, you've got a lot of garbage out and I didn't know what they meant by garbage and I said well whatever it is, I said I actually am feeling better inside now.

As Roger speaks of his experience of letting go of what happened to him in those schools, he explains this:

In school, we weren't allowed to ask and they [counsellor] said well you're not in school no more, and I said you're absolutely right and so that kind of stuff I had to let go and a

lot of them said [other survivors] how can you talk about it? I said the more you talk about it the easier it gets, you got to learn to let it go. You know it's not yours, it was never yours and don't blame yourself because you were only a kid.

I got the sense from Roger that talking about his experience was a huge weight off his shoulder and he realized that healing was taking place for him. He spoke of feeling much better after telling his story for the first time.

As Roger speaks about this time in his life, his "I" poem brought up the emotions he was feeling from a place of awareness to finding confidence in himself. There is a lot of physical and emotional feeling in his voice as he describes how this experience was for him in the circle. He was very vocal and it appears to have been a very humbling experience for him. Roger understood that he needed to make changes and recognized he had no control over what had happened to him because he was a child. He internalized the negative stereotypes he was subjected to in the residential school. When Roger realized he was no longer that scared child, there was strength in his voice. He understood he did have control and could make things better for himself. Roger is able to look at his life and say who he was not, who he wanted to be, and where he wanted to go; he is not all those stereotypes he was led to believe from those schools.

For Roger, letting go is essential to his healing and speaking of his experience helps him on his Red Road [healing journey]. When we travel our Red Road, it is a very personal experience that connects you on a level that speaks powerfully to Creator's law. Connecting with one's spirit by knowing who we are and where we are going in this life is very much a part of Creator's law. A good part of this connection means you are also connecting with Creator on a personal level by asking for support and guidance on a daily basis.

As I listen with my three ears to Roger's story, I find I have mixed emotions that affected me; unlike the first time I sat with Roger to hear his story. I have moments of sadness, pride, anger, happiness, sorrow, pain, compassion, and caring. As I read his story, I can clearly visualize Roger and hear his voice in my head. I realize with Roger's story, that listening to my father tell me stories as a child taught me how to really listen. I bothered my father to tell me the same stories over and over, and I never tired of listening. Clearly, that time in my life has brought meaning and purpose to this research and helped me to really listen to Roger's story.

Roger is an amazingly strong, compassionate, and caring human being. He comes from his heart and he finds strength and pride in what he does. The strength and resilience of our people just amazes me. He gives me such hope for the work we do with our people and reinforces just how much the work we do is heart driven. Each time I read his story I hear and feel the journey he is on. I wish so many other survivors who are still struggling to find their Red Road would also begin to talk about their experiences as a means to let go of the trauma they experienced. As a counsellor, I believe this is a key aspect to healing. He is right when he said our survivors were children; they had no control or power to stop what was happening to them.

Story 2: Barb's Story

Barb is a member of the Ishkahittaan Crow clan and she is of Tlingit and Southern Tutchone ancestry. Her nation is located in the unceded traditional territory of the Southern Tutchone people and she spent most of her life growing up on these traditional lands. Barb describes the first six years of her life with her grandmother as living a very healthy lifestyle. Her bond with her grandmother was very strong, and she learned a lot about living a traditional life. As a child, she says she was very outspoken and feels she was what she called "a smarty pants". She remembers being taken from her auntie's home to the mission school when she was six years

old. In grade three she was transferred to the residential school in [xxxx] where she experienced most of her trauma. Barb says she knows she had a number in residential school but does not remember.

Barb's story focuses on traditional values such as culture, knowing who you are, your identity, and language. She feels that the key to healing is learning about our culture and it was important for her healing journey:

Lots of education, I really took an interest in learning about how to make our people well, and of course making and applying to myself and everything to where my healing journey is now, is just focusing on our traditional values and beliefs and trying to bring those back.

Her traditional values and beliefs speak to our tribal, natural and Creator's law; all are intertwined in her story about how she learns. She speaks of her first six years at home with her grandmother who helped her remember and recall what she had learned as a small child, including her language that is not forgotten:

I think no matter how young we were we remember those [traditions] and I think I get a recall too for language I remember because we spoke it fluently before we went to school and I'm starting to get some phrases back.

As she talked about these key aspects to her healing I can see how she answers the questions in Anderson's diagram of "Who Am I", "Who Am I Not", and "Where Am I going?" The strong connections she developed with her grandmother speaks to the strong bond between child and grandparent, which is a part of our tribal law. Residential school did not take away her original thoughts, experiences, and traditions, which is similar to blood memory. We carry our

knowledge with us, it is passed on from one generation to the next through the genes, and we do not forget.

The “I” poems from Barb’s experiences convey a lot of action mixed with thoughts of what to do, and what needs to be done for her to heal. She expresses thoughts about the past and present, the significance to her, and how and who she is. By taking action, she worked to remember, and she knows the information resides inside her. Within her words, you could feel the confidence and sureness in what she focuses on and she believes this with all that she is.

I experienced Barb as an amazingly strong woman; her earlier life experiences help her on her healing journey. What she learned from her past transcended into the present and future. She expresses that it was important to tell me about her first years with her grandmother and how that solid grounding helped her survive residential school. She never lost what she learned from birth to six years old, and she works to uncover what residential school tried to erase. Her strong advocate’s voice and the survival skills she learned because of residential school is now put to use helping our people. Even after attending the schools, that resilient, determined, and outspoken little girl did not lose these qualities, which helped her survive to become a strong, intelligent woman.

As I listen to Barb’s story for the third time with my three ears, I realize how much her story affected me. Self-care was crucial to not taking on what was not mine to carry. When I look closer, listen with my heart and marinate in her story, I feel like I was there with her. I walk with her on this journey, of her experiences as an observer and witness. I feel her pain and fears, about not knowing and always feeling confused about her experiences in those schools. Her story touched my heart and soul.

Story 3: Ed's Story

Ed is a member the Yen Yédí Wolf clan and his nation is located in the unceded traditional territory of the Tlingit people from British Columbia. His father passed away when he was fourteen, and his mother raised him and his five siblings in [xxxx]. Ed has lived most of his life in [xxxx] and periodically returns to British Columbia. He describes his up-bring as a pretty normal lifestyle aside from discrimination, lack of work, and high levels of poverty back in the fifties and sixties. There was a lot of drinking and violence within his family. Ed went to residential school in [xxxx] for two years. While at residential school he was abused by the supervisor. He expresses that a combination of violence, alcohol, and attending residential school lead him to drinking for approximately twenty-five years. Ed said he worked hard during the day and played music in a band at night. For Ed, healing began when he was working in leadership for his nation in British Columbia and people were talking about the residential school issue. Ed decided it was time for him to start doing some research and to educate himself:

I started looking into this and I guess once you put your focus on something trying to find an answer to come of this situation, even though it's sort of cloudy and unsure and everything like that, you start finding things and I found books that dealt with trauma and I read that book and all the stuff that happened to us was mentioned in these books. I kind of went on my own little quest of sorts and started looking into this more and more, and I started educating myself.

As he describes his educational quest to find answers to what happened to our people in the residential schools he also discovered he was beginning to get triggered and his own anger started to bubble to the surface:

Once I understood what the problem was, I started looking for answers and by this time I was getting pretty triggered I guess. I was starting to kind of fall into; I don't know how you would say it. I guess I was getting like angry and I found myself starting to go back and I was getting really angry with the way we were treated.

Ed did not know that with knowledge comes change. He reports that change was discovering more about what he had been through and just how much he was affected by his residential school experience.

Education is an important factor in Ed's healing journey. It is a part of our Tribal Laws, just as we talk and learn about our cultural values, beliefs, and history. Ed indicates that learning from Elders is one way to connect with traditional teachings. As he was reading a book Ed realized he had heard the wisdom before, but he was not exactly sure where. He describes his discovery:

I've seen all this stuff before. Now where did I see it? And I always had a warm feeling when I thought about it in my heart and then I thought I know where it is – it's those Elders, those old time Elders. So I started thinking about the wisdom of these old timers.

Our tribal law speaks to the respect and honour we place on our Elders. They are the holders of our history and culture. Elders also play an active role in our healing and our cultural identity. Ed appreciated that an Elder's wisdom is an important part of our healing and he gravitated to them.

As I listened to Ed's "I" poems, I got a sense of lots of doing, a proactive stance and a sense of hunger to be filled with knowledge, because inside his story the message was 'education is power'. He was verbal and descriptive of what he saw and heard, mixed with thoughts from the past to the present.

Ed is a force to be reckoned with. He clearly sees his path, he knows what he has gone through and he knows where he is going. I witnessed his passion, drive, and focus. I noticed that what Ed learned, he learned well and he enacted it in his life. What he learned, he always shared. Sharing what we learn is very much a part of our Tribal laws. Ed is an advocate for our people and I believe he does this from his heart. There is energy to his story. He has an intensity that is very impactful and leaves a lasting impression long after being in his presence. I am astounded at Ed's resiliency given all that he has gone through, and that he is able to hold on to his sense of humour.

I have known Ed since I was a child. He was best friends with one of our brothers, so there is a sense of comfort and familiarity with Ed. He is soft-spoken, approachable, and there are moments of laughter and seriousness as he told his story. I appreciate his use of metaphors and one particular metaphor stands out for me:

It's like in a filing cabinet and I can take it [residential school story] out, look at, discuss and put it back in the cabinet without it hurting me.

I have started to use this metaphor with clients to explain that by talking about negative experiences you will begin to heal from them. Soon you will be able to file them away and bring them out without being re-traumatized. I like how this metaphor sets him apart from the trauma he experienced that he is not his trauma; this is what happened to him, but it does not have to be a part of him. He can set it aside and, in essence, let it go. So many of our residential school survivors internalized what was said to them and they believe this is who they are. Ed proves he is not and I believe he truly knows who he is.

Story 4: William's Story

William is a member of the Wolf clan and his nation is located in the unceded traditional territory of the Southern Tutchone people located in the Yukon. He is married to a woman who is a part of the Southern Tutchone people. His mother was originally from the Kaska Nation, and his dad was from the Tahltan Nation. William attended residential school from the age of six until he graduated twelve years later. At six years old, he was taken to the residential school in [xxxx]. At thirteen years old he was transferred to another residential school for three years and for his last two years to another - both locations were in [xxxx].

William describes his life after leaving residential school as needing time for him. When he returned home, only to see the effects of alcohol was still a big part of his families' life, he decided it was not for him. William had enough of school, so he worked at different jobs and did his survival work. Eventually he met his wife, and he attributes the continuation of his healing to his union with her. He reports that his wife is strong and comes from a good home. William was able to connect with Spiritual healers in Alberta, and that opened the door to a new way of knowing and being spiritual that is culturally relevant to him.

William indicates that a key factor in his healing was asking for help and recognizing he was not alone. He describes this experience by using a metaphor about falling:

I instill the belief in me that is the path that I'm on right now is like walking on the edge of a thin paper. You can fall on either side at any given time but at the same time it's not the falling that's really an issue it's finding a way to get back up and continue on the path and for me it's not hard right now to do that because I always ask for help.

William's metaphor reminded me of the metaphor of the "rabbit hole" told by a respected Elder. As we walk our path, if we are not paying attention we can fall into a "rabbit hole". At

first, we do not know how to get out. Eventually we do get out, but each time we fall into the rabbit hole we more quickly find our way out. In time, we no longer fall in because we learned all we needed to learn from that experience. William describes how he asks for help from his “home fire”:

Home fire is a belief system that was given to us, it looks after, first the home fire is looking after the Spirit within me - the gift of life that was given to me. It's not mine, I don't own it, I just have the responsibility of looking after it and when my time is up that responsibility is taken and given back, but that's my belief.

The gift of life is sacred and it was given to us by Creator. William recognizes this and he indicates that he has a responsibility to himself and to our people; he expresses that he wants to share and help people to see their home fire. This is Creator's law, the personal relationship we have with Creator because of the gift given to us.

For William being grateful each day and appreciating what he has was important to how he sees his life. The following quote shows that he does not take this lightly or for granted:

Being grateful that when I do a reality check that I don't have any sickness and to be grateful for that. To do a reality check and say you have a new day to change the way I am when I wake up in the morning and give thanks for that.

He extends his gratitude to include his family:

To acknowledge that my wife is still here with me, my daughter is still with me. We have grandchildren that are a part of our lives that we need to give them the tools to survive because their life is going to be different and how important it is for them to be connected with the Ancestors.

William's gratitude for what he has in his life is important to his continued healing. The importance of acknowledging what we have as opposed to longing for things we do not have seems to be the message William wants to convey. He is grateful for his grandchildren and the opportunity to instill in them a strong foundation of traditional teachings.

As I listened to William's "I" poems in his story of his "home fire", I could hear his action-oriented approach and the sense of respect he has for himself and others. His faith shines through with confidence and assurance in his voice. His voice comes across as polite and respectful, always asking for permission and he knows what works for him. As he speaks about gratitude, his voice is clear and concise, and he is grateful for all he has in his life. He does not seem to take anything for granted nor does he expect or ask for more.

William follows the three laws and his entire story is reflected back to each of these laws, which are embedded in his story. When he speaks of respect for self and others, asking for and giving help, and always being grateful, he connects with tribal, natural, and Creator's law. I got the sense that his personal spiritual relationship with Creator is paramount. It is through Creator's law that the other two laws are interconnected and interwoven, just as each button makes up the design and tells a story about the person wearing the button blanket, who and where they are, what their beliefs are, and the respect they have for self and their tribe.

I appreciate how he speaks of gratitude for what we have in our lives. I feel he is saying that we should be grateful for what we have because, if we are not and we only long for things we do not have, this will negatively affect our spirit. When I wake up each day and step outside, I always say thank you to Creator for allowing me another day on Mother Earth. I always ask the Ancestors to give me guidance and support. I am grateful for the lessons and teaching I receive each day. I never forget that in a single moment things can change unexpectedly.

William presents as a solid, strength based human being with strong traditional values. Plain spoken, he means what he says and he does what he means. He is very humble; even in his moments of silence you can feel his presence. In his story, William follows the traditions of our matriarchal system, recognizing the solid base of his home and life with his wife. He spoke of his wife with tenderness, love, respect and a deep understanding and connection. William passes no judgement on others, accepting everyone and everything as they are with a great deal of respect. He conveys ownership over his own path and journey and speaks of all of us holding our own journeys in this life and how we take our journey is of our choosing. In his story, he is not alone. William shared how we are all connected, all our relations, and he is a part of this whole. William's home fire remains bright until he is asked to go home to Creator, then he is no longer responsible for that inner light – his spirit.

Story 5: Grandmother's Story

Before attending the mission school in Whitehorse, Grandmother lived on the trap line with her family and led a very traditional lifestyle. At ten years old she was taken, and she spent approximately five years at the mission school. In the summer she was able to go home to her family, and she spent most of her time on the trap line. She describes her experience in residential school as being able to learn how to cook, sew and do craft work. Grandmother said the supervisor at the time in the residential school was respectful and understanding of our ways. The supervisor treated the children well, however when he passed his nephew took over and things changed. The new supervisor was very strict and punished the children.

Grandmother speaks of her healing and how she looks ahead and not back as a part of her journey:

You just look ahead – what does the future hold for me. Where do I go from here? I have lost many family members and this camp has always been a healing spot for us when there was a death in our family this is where we always come.

She made a plan, connected with family, the land, and spoke about what needed to be done:

This is where we always come to and have a dinner and discussion what we [family] are going to do and how we are going to do it and this is where we did everything, down here [her camp].

She always questions what and where she wants to go. She is clear about wanting to see where the future leads. Interconnectedness is the key to her continued healing. She does not look back, the past cannot be changed; she hopes to learn from our past in order to move forward in a healthier way. Having strong connection to family is a part of our beliefs in Tribal law. The connection she has to her camp spoke volumes to our natural law and having respect for the land.

In her story, she finds solace and is grounded by her crafts, especially her sewing. In Grandmother's story, she teaches others about sewing as a way of giving back:

I teach people how to sew with a sewing machine, how to do their regalia's and moccasins and to me it's my sewing that is healing for me. Like if I'm depressed or mad or something and I just pick up my sewing and it just calms me down and I can think and do things better after that so that is my healing.

Grandmother expresses pride in what she does and describes how sewing is therapeutic. There is a sense of pride and a good feeling as she speaks about her sewing and that she can share her knowledge about her gifts.

Grandmother's "I" poems are focused; there is confidence in her voice and a strength you feel as she talks about her life and the conscious choices she has made for herself. There is a lot

of action by doing, and for Grandmother, “action” is important to her moving forward with her life and continued healing. Keeping busy is important through “doing”; Grandmother’s knowledge is connected to her activities, hobbies, and lifestyle. Grandmother does not seem concerned with small details and her commitment to larger tasks came across. She expresses faith in her own abilities and depends on herself. She speaks about the past and the present. There was some unsureness as she speaks about past events, especially when she needs support. She puts her feelings and thoughts into everything she does through reflection before taking action.

Grandmother’s story is very clear to me. She expresses self-knowledge, knowledge of where she wants to go, and she has figured out how she will arrive. As an Elder, she articulates her responsibilities to her family and community, and this is tribal law. Her grandchildren are the focal point of her life. Of all the storytellers, she expressed that residential school was not so bad for her. The strength of her parents to ensure the safety of their children is evident in her story. I wish this could have been the same for all our people. She is a very “matter of fact” storyteller. In her story, Grandmother operates from her stated belief system. Her connection to family, land, animals and her belief in Creator is very strong. Throughout her story she follows tribal, natural, and Creator’s laws. She states she does not believe in looking back, but going forward, because the past is truly the past and she no longer resides or lingers there.

Sewing is one of my passions, so I can completely relate to Grandmother as she speaks about her sewing. As an avid sewer, I also find sewing healing. There is a sense of accomplishment and pride in the art of sewing; it feels good to share those skills because you are sharing knowledge. It feels good to watch something you create develop before your eyes. As I pursue my education, building my button blanket helps me stay grounded.

From this storyteller, I learned a lot about how our traditional beliefs are strong in our culture despite colonization and residential schools. As a people, we are very resilient. As she told her story, it was nice to be on the land just to hear the sounds of nature around us. There was a sense of calm, warmth, and comfort that I can only describe as a connection to Spirit, Creator and the Ancestors all around us. She knows my family, and she shared stories about my family I have never heard before. It was very special to me; it touched my heart.

Story 6: Norman's Story

Norman is of Kaska and Tahltan ancestry and his nation is located in the unceded traditional territory of the Kaska people located in the Yukon. His mother is Kaska and his father is Tahltan. He spent the first six years of his life living a traditional lifestyle with his parents in British Columbia. Each winter he would go on the trap line with his parents. At seven years old, Norman was taken from his parents and sent to residential school in [xxxx]. He spent approximately five years there. Norman started to drink at a very young age. He was shy and found drinking helped him to be less shy. Norman started working and was getting into trouble with people in authority, such as the police. He did not like authority figures due to his experience in residential school.

Norman feels he was trying to drink himself to death. He had so much loss and grief that he did not want to feel his pain, so alcohol was a way to cope with it. In 19xx Norman decided to quit alcohol "cold turkey". He stopped and never went back. In that same year he met his wife, who he has been with for approximately thirty-six years. He contributes this relationship to his continued sobriety and healing. For Norman, forgiveness is a part of his healing, but it is hard for him to do:

We survived, we made it this far and I'm glad we lived through this, that residential school and we can live through anything I think. But it took me a long time to forgive, to forgive people like what happened in the school but that's the only way you can move on.

Norman sees both sides of his residential school experience and realizes that no one is perfect and there is good and bad in all people:

Forgive yourself or ask for forgiveness or for being prejudice but it's not your fault. You just ask. You know we were all prejudice because they [residential school] made us that way that's how we were. The white people were running the school and they made us prejudice but then we get older and there's good and bad in everybody. There's good people and there's bad people and all are even. We are not perfect.

I think Norman makes a good point, that forgiveness is important not only for ourselves but for those that have treated us badly. We are all still here and for us to move forward with our lives we need to forgive and let go. All people have their faults, no matter where they come from. What we learned in the schools, we have made a part of our lives. He sees both sides of his residential school experience, and this helped him to find forgiveness. He knows no one is perfect including him. Both Creator and tribal law involve forgiveness and accepting people for who they are. Norman says he prays for those who said or did wrongs because they do not know what they are doing, they don't realize it.

Norman speaks of interconnectedness by spending time on the land and having respect for everything because everything comes from Creator:

The Creator created everything, respect for this land. Respect everything. Every little thing including bugs, everything's for a purpose. We learned that but we learned in the bush. As you get older you think oh yeah that's right, we shouldn't kill those little bugs

or step on them. My parents were right they're here for a reason. Everything's here for a reason.

He describes that interconnectedness with all living beings is a part of our healing:

It's made to be a part of this world here and everything has its purpose, everything and that's the healing all right. We use the grandfather rocks we call it like that because they've been burnt [in the fire] already, everything's alive and that's what keeps me going.

Norman sees himself as a part of the interconnectedness and the holistic way of being and knowing; this has been important in his healing. For Norman he follows the natural law, to be out on the land is healing because there is always something to do to keep busy. I have heard from many of our people who have indicated that "keeping busy" supported them on their Red Road.

In Norman's "I" poems he spoke about forgiveness. I got a sense of relief from him that we had survived residential school and we are still here. There seems to be some doubt and hesitation in his voice as he considers how we continue and move forward, but this is only fleeting. He speaks about his connections to nature and being on the land and I sense this connection is very strong and resides within his heart. For him to be connected to nature means his connection and spiritual relationship with Creator is also strong, this is Creator's law. He says he longs for the days when living on the land was our way of life, and as he thinks out loud, for a moment he goes back to that place when he was a child on the trap line with his parents.

As I read over Norman's story and listen with my three ears, I sense he longs for the past but knows he must go forward. His connection to the land is vital to his healing, and the foundation of his world is his wife. He follows the tradition of our culture that women are the

strength and foundation of our family and community. I hear his resiliency in his humor, his ability to forgive, and his strong connection to Creator and all our relations. He knows he has not lost who he is because of residential school – he remembers where he came from.

Norman’s story had a profound effect on me when we spoke about the heart and mind connections. He talks about being able to see the people he is speaking about ‘before his eyes’; he is not sure why it is this way. When I read his story for the third time, it came to me that he is speaking about how we carry the people we love in our hearts whether they are still here with us or gone to the Spirit World. I also see the people I love when I speak of them. I know our heart remembers, and when we speak about our loved ones our heart sends this image to our minds for our eyes to see. Norman’s story gives me many lessons; most importantly to be a better human being and counsellor to our people.

Story 7: Alice’s Story

Alice is of Kaska ancestry and her nation is located in the unceded traditional territory of the Kaska people. She was born in the southern region of the Yukon in the cold month of December and has lived all of her life in the north. She has five children, including her nephew whom she raised when her sister passed away. Alice was six years old when she was taken to residential school at [xxxx]. She was there for ten years after which she was sent to residential school in [xxxx]. When Alice left school and returned to her community, she did not want to go back to the school because of everything that had happened there. To escape the school, she got married and had a large family. Alice describes her marriage as very tumultuous because the relationship included alcohol and physical abuse by her partner. She stayed in the relationship for many years but eventually got tired of being hit. She left, taking nothing with her other than her children. Alice describes the next four years of her life as filled with drinking, until one day she

realized what she was doing to herself. She internalized and believed everything her ex-partner and the residential school staff had said about her including that she could not do anything and would not amount to anything. Once she realized this, Alice stopped drinking because she saw what she was doing to herself and her children. She said it was not easy. She had a rough time, but she persevered and started by focusing on getting an education.

For Alice, her lived experience played a key role in her healing. She gave back by using her lived experience to help others. She was hired to support our people with their addictions and was asked if she was willing to take on this task:

I don't know anything about alcohol. She [employer] said just go by your experience and what you go through. That way you could talk to people. So I said okay.

She noticed that she began to see changes in the people she supported:

But then there were some Elders and some older guys my age and they started quitting, so that was really good and then I got another job, so I switched jobs and they began to train me.

Alice had a mentor who provided on-the-job training and showed her how to work respectfully with people while ensuring she maintained confidentiality by following tribal law. She learned a lot from this experience. With her lived experience, she began to share with the people she counselled how she worked on her healing:

Because when I talk about alcohol, I tell them I was there. I said I drank, I did this, and I used foul language. I said but when I quit I learned a whole lot about myself and what I went through.

She goes on to say that talking with people about her experience helped them to realize they are not alone in this. She has also been there:

That's why I talk to you, so you don't have to think you're alone in what you're going through. Everybody goes through that. So that's how I teach them.

As I listen to her talk about her role as an addiction counsellor, I know she was saying that you can't fool a person, or say to someone who has been through the experience that they don't know what they are talking about, because they do! She speaks from a place of lived experience; her knowledge and understanding is abundant.

In listening to Alice's "I" poems she comes across as a genuine and open person. There is an essence of "you can't kid a kidder" when it comes to her experiences with alcohol and being a survivor of the residential school system. She knows what she speaks of and with that comes confidence and knowledge. As she reflects on what she has done and where she is at, there is a deliberate process with lots of action and description of self. She has an energy about her, and I can hear it in her voice. She has such pride in herself and what she does to give back to our people.

As I listened to Alice's story, I noted her rich cultural knowledge base. She is a very respectful and kind woman. Within her quiet demeanour, there is a strong, resilient person with a voice. She is petite and you would not know she was quiet and shy at one time in her life. She has done a great deal to heal herself and always contributes back to her community about what she learned and what worked for her. She lived through it and is a stronger person because of her experience in residential school. Alice has a keen sense of who she is and who she is not. She pays attention to our protocols that are a part of women's responsibilities and proper conduct, and she follows our tribal law.

I absolutely admire and adore Alice. I knew her before hearing her story. She is a positive person and has a lively energy about her. I learned more from her about what it means to be an

Indigenous woman who has traditional protocols that must be followed and respected. I appreciate her for what she has been through and how she survived. She initially describes herself as very shy. I could relate to her stress around shyness, and I like how she challenges herself and has overcome her fears to have a strong voice in her community. She made me think of my family experiences and how we relate to each other within tribal law. I admire her genuineness and in some ways her innocence in how she approaches things she does not know by questioning first. She admits she does not know while saying I want to learn. She allows herself to feel her feelings, and then she examines why she feels the way she does. I love this about her! She has broken those residential school rules of: “don’t feel, don’t trust and don’t talk”. Through her story, she taught me so much about our traditional beliefs. Stories educate us, heal us, make us proud and show us how to live life and tell our history as a people.

Story 8: Adeline’s Story

Adeline is a member of the Kùkhhittàn Clan – Raven Children and her nation is located in the unceded traditional territory of the Tlingit people in the Yukon. Her Tlingit name is “Kh'ayàdê”. She was taken at five years old and attended the mission school in [xxxx], for the next seven years. She continued her education at the local elementary and high school in [xxxx] while she resided at home. She described her experience at residential school as ‘she did fine’ even though she was a small person. She said she stood up for herself and did not let anyone bully her. She felt she did better at residential school because of the abuse in her home. She got married young so she could leave her home and escape the abuse. Her marriage and her family was what made the biggest difference in her life.

For Adeline, her educational endeavors and career aspirations play a key role in her healing. She describes this:

I was totally comfortable working there in the kitchen and then I worked in the laundry after that. I went back and got more education and I was able to get my job in the government but I worked for the First Nation council in the Yukon for a few years in enrolment. So those are the kinds of things I think I find healing.

Spending time on the land and connecting with Elders also helps with her healing:

Being on the land and being involved with the Elders. I'm on the Elders Council for my First Nation and I just find it so nice to be around those Elders, they're trying their hardest to give back, that's so important.

She follows tribal law through the gift of giving of self and spending time with Elders.

Adeline recognizes the contributions our Elders make by the teachings they give. The connection to land is grounding for her; she respects the land as defined in our natural law.

Adeline knows that culture is healing. She told the story of how she believed she was going to need a lot of help the first time she learned how to make a cedar headband:

I just thought wow, well they're probably going to have to do a lot of helping with me and so I thought well I'll try it I said and she showed me and I just took off and made it, it was so healing.

She surprised herself at how well she did and the pleasure she had in making something she had doubts about. To do such a good job increased her self-esteem and confidence and it was healing. As I read her weaving story, I wondered if this was "blood memory". She was able to do this so naturally, as if it was innate. The knowledge and experience was already there, passed down from generations who did this work well.

Adeline's "I" poems have a lot of action and doing. There appears to be a "busyness" about her. At times, she seemed to have doubts, but this is not enough to stop her. She is not

afraid to try new things, and she faces her fears. When she has doubt she has to think about what or how she would proceed, but once she did she was on her way. Making a difference in her community is important, and at times I could hear the passion in her voice. There was a feeling of satisfaction – healing in all she did.

She looked for the positives in her experience at residential school. I felt that it was very important to her that I understood this. She knows of many stories and the bad things that went on, but for her it was okay and she did fine. She strikes me as a very determined lady with lots of strengths because she faced her fears and did what she needed to regardless of the fear she faced. She gained her strength and healing by advocating for our people. As she spoke of her contributions to our community, she reminded me of our late uncle who also did so much through the land claims process to help our people. Clearly, her healing is connected to helping others because she wants it to be better for others. She spoke of how she owes who she is today to the teachings she got from her mother. Her husband is fundamental to her stable home and she confides in him. She says she loves her children and did the best she could to raise them well, but her grandchildren are her heart and they are a focal point to her continued healing.

Story 9: Judy's Story

Judy is a member of the Ganaxtedi Crow clan and her nation is located in the unceded traditional territory of the Southern Tutchone people in the Yukon. She is the Elder Representative for her nation on the Elders Council she offers advice and guidance to Chief and Council. She has spent many years in leadership for our people in land claims negotiation, sat on various Boards and Committees, and was the Commissioner of the Yukon. Judy has received many awards and acknowledgments for her hard work, including receiving the Order of Canada.

Her first experience with residential school began when she was taken at six years old. She started out in day school then later was registered in the mission school where she stayed until 19xx. She then went to another residential school until she was sixteen years old and when she was old enough to leave she did not return even when her parents tried to convince her to go back. Residential school had too many strict rules and regulations and she had had enough of that. Judy kept herself busy at home, looking after the kids [siblings] and cleaning so her parents would not bother her too much about school.

For Judy, her healing came about through helping our community and people. She describes herself as a “doer”; if something needed to be done, she would make it happen:

So I see myself going out there to help when something needs to be done if there’s a new program or a new this or that. I like to be a part of it because in the end something good is going to happen. Something good comes out of it.

For Judy, this is her healing because she is supporting and advocating for her community:

It makes me feel good, I feel energized. It lifts me up, it makes me feel comfortable, it makes me feel good. It’s not like I don’t think about I’m there and I’m going to heal something in me. I think it’s just me (laughs). It’s my doing, maybe it’s my passion.

She has a responsibility for our people and community:

I just went out, I believed in what I wanted to do and what was the best for my people. I went and did it worked really hard but I also really respected the people I worked with.

Judy’s career has been her healing and her passion and this is central to our tribal laws. We are all interconnected and we should be there for each other with the guidance of our leaders. She appears to have found her passion and nothing will stop her. The belief she has in what she is doing seems very strong. Judy is heart driven with all she does; she thrives on this and it

benefits all our people. She gets her strength and healing by identifying who she is by helping our people. She knows this is her responsibility as a leader and an Elder.

Judy's "I" poems come with an energized feeling you can hear and sense as she speaks about healing through the work she does. She does not directly say this is what heals her as much as it is something that happens while she is busy "doing". Sometimes there appears to be hesitation and doubt in her voice, but she still moved forward. Eventually, you can hear when her doubt is gone and she's got this now! For Judy, this all seemed to come naturally, sometimes more action than thought was needed. I sense it is more of a feeling or a gut instinct that comes from within and I wonder if this is not "blood memory". Colonization changed the place of our women and took them out of the political realm. Traditionally, women always had a place in the political circle (Anderson, 2016). Judy carried the genetic memory of our women's position in politics, and she is a natural talent at helping make change happen for our people.

My impression of Judy is that she has a passion for her work. Her love is her family, and she defines herself through her work with our people. She is confident, strong, and a purposeful Indigenous woman. You feel her presence when she walks into the room; you cannot miss it, and it can be intimidating and humbling at the same time. I witnessed her political work to bring back the tradition of sharing her belief in our culture's matriarchal system; she broke the colonial stereotype of who we are not. She works tirelessly for our people to decolonize and bring back our interconnectedness and holistic balance. I get a sense from Judy that educating self through reading and doing her homework gave her power to make changes for the better; healing was something that just happened as a part of this process. As she said:

So I think it just was natural and then reading my materials. I do my homework. I like to be a part of it [new program] because in the end, something good is going to happen.

I really do admire Judy and see her as a strong role model for me and our people. She is living proof that colonization and the residential school experience did not break us as a people. We resisted, grew stronger, redefined who we are, and above all we are resilient. She taught me that a formal education is not the only way to succeed in a colonial world that still wants us to bow down to colonized ways of knowing and doing. She validated that our lived experience is recognized in our culture as a legitimate way to learn, share knowledge and our people recognized and believed in her this way.

Closing the circle

For our people, our stories are our education, history, and healing. The stories speak to the ways we understand how knowledge is carried, shared and how we find meaning. All of the storytellers shared the stories about their healing and within each story were multiple stories that made up the entire story; everything was interconnected. As I listened to their stories with my three ears, the two on the side of my head and my heart, I could feel and see their stories. The “I” poems allowed me to pick up on the nuances, thoughts, feelings, and how they saw themselves within their stories. Every story was embedded with our laws, tribal, natural and Creator’s. I walked with each of these storytellers as they spoke of what healing meant for them. Their stories are now a part of me; I carry them with me and they have become a part of the teaching tools that will help me to be the traditional counsellor and human being I want to be. I know sharing their stories was healing for them, for me, and will be for our people in counselling. All storytellers had the opportunity to look over their story segments within this chapter to ensure that the meaning making was what they intended. The feedback I got from all storytellers was positive, that the meaning making was a close portrayal of their healing stories. The storytellers’ complete stories are located in Appendix A.

Chapter 5: Conversation

Throughout this document, in all chapters I have used the term “our people” to personalize and include myself within this research. This personalization follows the protocols of conducting research within an Indigenous Methodology because I walked with each of these storytellers as they shared their stories with me. All of the Indigenous scholars mentioned within this document speak of how subjective and heart driven we are when conducting this type of research process (Absolon, 2011; Archibald, 2008; Kovach, 2009; & Wilson, 2008).

The purpose of this study was to answer the question: How do Yukon Aboriginal People define healing from the Residential School experience? What continues to support survivors to maintain their healing? Through the storytelling process I discovered that for our people healing comes from a strong foundation centered in culture. I have heard from many Aboriginal professionals in the helping field that “culture is healing” (Baskin, 2011; Gone, 2011; Hart, 2002; McCormick, 2009). The connection to land, spirituality, cultural activities, family, and community (McCormick, 2005) was so important for all storytellers. All of these connections come through and are part of our natural, tribal and Creator’s law. I will reaffirm the findings of this research from the various Indigenous scholars cited in this study. I believe that my questions were answered but there were limitations due to the subjective and personal approach to the research. The future of this type of research is important for our people if they are to get the support that is culturally safe in counselling practices and theory (Heilbron & Guttman, 2000; McCormick, 2009). This study is but a small glimpse into what our people define as healing, further research by other Indigenous scholars is important.

Our Healing

One core implication in the healing of our people was the connection to land and land based activities. McCormick (2009) speaks directly to this relational connection with the land and engaging in land-based activities our people feel grounded, secure, stronger, and socially connected. All storytellers told their story and related their healing to spending time on the land and participating in various activities, such as: trapping, fishing, hunting, gathering medicines, and sharing teachings of land based activities. We are guided by the natural laws of nature which connects with all living spirits. In 2014 Ross indicated for our people connection to and spending time on the land had great benefits to well-being and health that is often deeply felt with lasting positive outcomes.

Incorporated with our connection to land and land based activities is our spirituality because it is here that we connect with Creator on the deepest of levels. Directly or indirectly all storytellers discussed how their connection to their spirit was through connection to land, the animals and praying to Creator. Robbins and Dewar (2011) pointed out that interconnectedness with Mother Earth and our people is integral to our healing. Ross (2014) elaborated further by saying that we are all traveling on the same Red Road together as we work to move closer to Creator's spirit in all that we do. Healing is a life goal for our people and not just a response to a specific injury in one situation (Ross, 2014). As you listen to the storytellers and their stories, you will find the healing approaches they incorporated in their lives as part of their healing, this was not done deliberately or on a conscious level – this is a way of life and living. When our people work to decolonize themselves and connect with their cultural beliefs the progression of healing begins whether this is recognized or not – there is innateness to this process.

Culture is healing and culture speaks to our identity as a people. For all storytellers the inclusion of cultural knowledge and activities was important to their healing (McCabe, 2007; McCormick, 2009; Ross, 2014). Some of the storytellers spoke specifically about language and reviving their language as a part of healing. McCormick (2009) agrees language is important in our people's personal recovery. Other storytellers spoke of activities like sewing and weaving as grounding. As Ross (2014) stipulated, our people do not have to talk their way back in order to heal, they have a choice to express how they are doing by what is helpful to their healing, such as: beadwork, carving, drawing or making a collage. Some storytellers were clear that speaking about their experiences was important in order for them to let go and move forward. I think for these storytellers talking about their experiences was important in their healing but other forms of healing without words is important to note.

For all the storytellers family and community were important to their continued healing. Some spoke of having a strong, healthy relationship with their spouse and all spoke of connection to their communities was important. Giving back by supporting socially, politically, spiritually and advocating for our people is within our tribal law. Heilbron and Guttman (2000) pointed out that for most people new to their Red Road this will start out as a personal healing journey but eventually they will want to include their communities. The relationship between an individual and their community clearly supports our Aboriginal worldview that interconnectedness is important, more so than just individual healing (Heilbron & Guttman, 2000).

A very important factor to family and connection to community is our Elders and the responsibilities all the storytellers recognized as they are now the Elders in our communities. Elders offer advice, share knowledge and connect with the younger generation. For several of the

Indigenous scholars cited in this study, most made reference to Elders for their advice, knowledge and the relationship to children (Baskin, 2011; McCormick, 2009; Poonwassie & Charter, 2005; Ross, 2014). In Hart's work (2002), Cree Elders identified children as the "meaning of life" (p. 48). My experience and understanding is Elders and children have a strong personal bond, there is an understanding both have about life as one approaches the Spirit World and the other has newly left the Spirit World – the connection is strong.

Personal Perspective

This research was very subjective and did come with biases. As pointed out by various Indigenous methodological scholars this type of research places the researcher at the center of the research (Absolon, 2011; Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008). So my personal thoughts and interpretations of the stories shared with me was important to the research process. Two of the storytellers I have known since I was a small child, and others I know through family and friends, so there was a strong connection which can bring about biases. Others storytellers I knew from the work and contributions they have made in the public eye and as helpers to our people. Indigenous methodology is subjective but I think even more so when you are doing research in your own community.

One particular bias was questions I did ask for clarity from the storytellers I could have potentially steered the storytellers in a desired path that would contribute to answering my questions and become the focus of the story. I was conscious of this and did with my best effort to not direct storytellers by focusing on asking questions only for clarification or situating the storyteller. I noted with a couple of storytellers I had to ask questions throughout the storytelling to keep the story flowing and this opened the door to further risk of increased bias. To help decrease this potential I would say to storytellers that there was not a right or wrong answers to

telling me their story and it was more about what they felt I needed to know – trusting the process.

As I used the “I” poems as a way to capture the essence of the storyteller’s story by highlight their tone of voice, possible thoughts/feelings, and actions, I know I may not get the full meaning when presented in written form. As pointed out by Archibald (2008) when the storyteller’s story goes from an oral context to a written document the meaning making of the researcher can miss tones, gestures, rhythm, and personality. I would be remiss in thinking that this factor does not also affect the meaning making of each storyteller’s story in this study. Both Cruikshank (1991) and McClellan (2001) in their research with Yukon Indigenous people have tried to retain the oral essence of the stories they researched by writing down what was said as it was originally said. One storyteller did make the comment about changing the stories and taking out her families’ names and only using “cousin”, “auntie/uncle”, “grandmother/father” leaves the reader wondering who are they talking about? Which auntie or cousin, indicating we have many family members and knowing what lineage (family trails) helps to understand and situate the person telling the story (Absolon, 2011). I believe this has to do with relationality, how do you know someone if you do not know who they are and where they come from, how do you relate to them? We are a proud people and sharing about our ancestry on a personal level helps situate who you are and how people will relate to you because they may also be your relation (Absolon, 2011). As pointed out by Roger residential school tried to erase our identity along with who our relations was, many of our people did not know who they were related to and incest occurred – there is importance to knowing and saying who we are.

I feel it is important to note that storytelling of itself is healing and a few of the storytellers reflected this back to me when they completed their story. Archibald (2008) wrote

about the power of stories to heal and access knowledge so we also learn. Poonwassie and Charter (2005) concurred by writing that storytelling is a means of conveying several cultural values in an effective and influential way. Storytelling has importance by asserting that the capacity for combining the relationship with self and the universe. Poonwassie and Charter (2005) wrote:

The synergizer uses picture words to awaken in the listeners the awareness that they have within themselves all the elements necessary for their own healing. Synergizers are also the seed bearers; they plant images in our consciousness that take root and flower (p. 20).

As a counsellor I have always believed that we do plant seeds with our clients in the hopes they will one day germinate, be nurtured and given water. When I listened with my “three ears” (Archibald, 2008) to all of the storyteller’s stories each one of them planted within me seeds and food for thought and this has taken root and flowered. There was personal healing and images planted within my sub-consciousness/consciousness, and new methods for this counsellor to use with our people. For example I have begun to incorporate a metaphor I got from Ed about how he is able to take out his story from a filing cabinet talk about it and place it back in the filing cabinet without being re-traumatized. This example gives those new to their healing path a sense of how addressing their own story over time can become less painful and triggering but healing.

Limitations and delimitations

Indigenous methodology can be conceptualized in “we are all related” (Absolon, 2011, p. 30) which advises our holistic and relational nature to attaining knowledge. Our knowledge is holistically developed from our heart, body, mind and spirit (Absolon, 2011). Our stories are knowledge and cannot draw conclusions across various circumstances because of the uniqueness and personalization of each individual story. My goal was to convey the storytellers’ messages

that identified the knowledge embedded in and across the stories about their healing. The research is not without biases due to the inclusion of our thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and reminiscing in the past (Kovach, 2009). Since this research was generated using an Indigenous methodology I interpreted this knowledge within my own perspective of ways of knowing (Absolon, 2011; Kovach, 2009).

Trusting the process allows me to state the limitations and delimitations of this work. Due to the distance from our traditional territory, I did not have continued or regular access to the storytellers to get their feedback and guidance. Having access to an Elder on a regular basis was also not possible. The moments I had with storytellers and an Elder were only when I was actually in our traditional territory and that was during the actual story gathering and when I presented the storytellers with their written story. Archibald (2008) speaks to the importance of including and continued connection with storytellers and Elders as we conduct our research from an Indigenous methodology.

Due to the small sample of storytellers for this research I was not able to get a thorough picture within this study to address all possible aspects of our people in regards to the effects of colonization and residential school. Within qualitative and narrative approaches to research my sample size is larger than the norm. This research is but a snapshot of ways our people are addressing the issues around healing from the residential school experience. Further research is clearly needed in other areas, such as second, third or fourth generation survivors. More research needs to be conducted in the North as there is very little research being done specific to Yukon Indigenous peoples based on my current literature review. This is like thinking about the button blanket I have been working on while conducting this research. I know there are so many different designs and interpretations of the button blanket by many different Westcoast tribes and

this is but one small contribution. Just as the button blanket continues to be developed by various Westcoast tribes this research has the potential for further development by other scholars.

The research was done with a specific group of people and the sample size was small and located within a specific geographical area that may not be transferable or applicable to our people in other regions of the world. I must restate that there is a uniqueness and personalization of this research (Absolon, 2011; Kovach, 2009) that also makes it not replicable because it is not a standardized method (Wilson, 2008). One cannot walk in another person's moccasins believing they will experience and acquire knowledge in the same way that I have in in this research. My interpretations of the knowledge within these stories are how I made meaning of and related to the knowledge.

This research cannot be generalized to all of our people, although this research is open to interpretations by the people reading this document. Since this research is open to interpretation and can be cited by other scholars or the general population, I do not have control over how they choose to interpret this research. I can only hope that what I have said here is clear and succinct enough to hopefully be interpreted as it was intended by the storytellers and me. I know once a document is published people will interpret the information generally from the viewpoint of their own beliefs, thoughts, and ideas – that is the lens they are most familiar with and understand. For example when I am asked a question about Indigenous methodology I found most times the question was asked from a Western perspective, understandably since Western perspective is paramount in Canadian academic research. The concern with this type of questioning is the questions being asked usually does not fit with the topic at hand because using a question generated from a Western perspective does not fit within an Indigenous methodology. Western is linear and an Indigenous methodology is holistic in nature (Absolon, 2011; Wilson, 2008).

When I developed my inclusion and exclusion criteria this was done from a respectful and caring place (Archibald, 2008; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Louis, 2007). I know there would be lots I could learn from residential school survivors who were struggling with their health and wellness or who had just begun their Red Road but my concern was with re-traumatizing them. Our tribal and Creator's law clearly indicate we are not to harm our people, we must show respect, understanding, and loving kindness. As a counsellor this law is a part of our code of ethics (Canadian Counselling & Psychotherapy Association, 2007) and these same ethics exist in our ways of knowing.

An important delimitation was deciding to include Ed who asked to be a part of this research that I had initially denied due to his nation's location. I realized that I was looking at this through colonial eyes and thoughts because I was making this decision based on colonial boundaries between Yukon and British Columbia. I am speaking specifically about Ed's nation situated in British Columbia. When I realized what I had done, I decolonized my thoughts and actions by inviting Ed to be a part of the research thankfully he was not offended and understood when I explained what I had done. These European settler boundaries did not exist prior to colonization and I had to re-position the research and myself to show that these boundaries would not limit research done in an Indigenous methodology (Absolon, 2011) and with our people.

While the research methods in this study had limitations I believe there is richness to understanding the healing journey of our people from the residential school experience in the Yukon. Providing this research through the eyes of an Indigenous methodology gives a voice to our people to say what helped them on their healing journey. This research is one starting point but opens the door to further exploration by other scholars. Further research into the unique

experiences and knowledge of our residential school survivors and their personal stories of healing is greatly needed.

Looking forward

This study confirms what other Indigenous scholars have said, that for our people healing happens from a holistic, and interconnected way (Gone, 2013; McCabe, 2008; McCormick, 2005; McCormick, 2009; Stewart, 2008). Our traditional healing methods includes everything involved with culture, we are connected to the land, animals, spirituality, universe and with each other (McCormick, 2005; Ross, 2014). As a counsellor I know that from professional experience there is a need for our people to have access to traditional healing practices. Western counselling practices can no longer ignore or side step that our traditional healing practice has legitimacy and a place in supporting our people. As the First People's we have an inherit right to receive proper mental health support that includes respecting our ways of knowing and doing (The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). If non-Aboriginal counsellors want to support our people they need to understand our beliefs, respect them, and include them within their counselling practices. As McCormick (2009) points out most mental health providers have a very poor understanding of our cultural value, beliefs and knowledge. My professional experience is non-Aboriginal health providers use methods and practices that are euro-centric or cultural inappropriate, even in the queries (e.g., assessments, questionnaires) they conduct with our people. Some questions can be offensive and seen as disrespectful or are laced with colonial undertones. Poonwassie and Charter (2005) suggested that for non-Aboriginal counsellors to be effective with our people they must address our values, lived experience, use culturally appropriate communication, and work with our people on appropriate goals. Inclusion and active

participation with our people is vital to making these effective changes in counselling for our people.

One of the possible clinical implications for support providers in the traditional territories of our people is about listening with their “three ears” to our stories (Archibald, 2008). Within our stories you will find imbedded our healing, this needs to be teased out by listening and learning. This may require working harder to listen, to understand, and with an open heart and mind. Our people know what healing means we have been following our laws that incorporate all aspects of how we live a good life and how we approach our ways of knowing (Ross, 2014). The current storytelling data seem to suggest an urgent and critical need for the inclusion in all aspects of our healing and we know “culture is healing”. The counselling methods and practices are too standardized and linear – one method does not fit for all. For example, family counselling assessments can no longer focus on just the “nuclear family” when administered to our people when we define family to also include extended family, friends, and community.

The practical and social implications for our people are two-fold: (a) there needs to be increased training, education, and awareness within all areas when working to support our people including how our people are treated, and (b) policies and procedures within various territorial agencies need to be revised to include how our people are treated, supported, and acknowledged. Otherwise it could lead to our people continuing to experience systemic discrimination and oppression. Our people need to be included and have a voice in how these changes should come about from the beginning to the final development and revamping of these regulations, methods, policies and procedures. I discuss these implications from my personal and professional experience as an Indigenous person and counsellor. To continue to imply that we have “cultural competency” “cultural safety” or “cultural awareness” but not really know what that means and

how it should be incorporated within the supporting of our people has little meaning and lasting effect.

For our communities in the Yukon, I know we make up a large part of the population and finding good supports within the community are few and far between, including finding counsellors that are Indigenous. Ideally it would be great if we had greater Indigenous representations among the available supports and counsellors, but this is not the case. Of our people who are in the helping field; most times they are stretched to the max and the potential for burnout is a reality. As a counsellor who has worked to support and advocate for our people I have also experienced vicarious trauma and burnout. If we are from the communities we serve, we also walk a very fine ethical line because we provide services to our own people who we see in our community on a regular basis outside our counselling office.

The methodological implications for an Indigenous methodology include the following three points: First this methodology needs to be recognized as a valid and legitimate way of conducting research within any academy (Absolon, 2011; Kovach 2009), Secondly as an Indigenous scholar I echo other Indigenous scholars mentioned in this document the need for our ways of knowing and doing research within a Western Academy be accepted, acknowledged, and recognized (Absolon, 2011; Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008), and Thirdly the policy and procedures within the Academy needs to respect our cultural beliefs and changes must be made to valid and legitimize our Indigenous Methodology (Absolon, 2011). These changes can only happen when the academy fully opens its doors to our people and we can sit in the same space and collaborate to make these changes. Within the Constitution of Canada our people have a right to an education (Comparative Constitution Project, 2017) and based on the TRC's Calls to Action - 94 recommendations we also have a say in what and how that education should be

provided (The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). We seek and want sovereignty, to be self-governing over all aspects of our lives as the First Peoples of North America (Cavalieri, 2013) and that includes our education.

The significance of these stories clearly points to everything that has been discussed in this research. There is a lot of rich information that contributes to the way our storytellers have done healing for themselves without using Western counselling methods or have used a combination of both practices in their healing. What is clear is this research points to and contributes to the ever growing evidence that culture is healing and required for our people. As the research continues to come forth from other Indigenous scholars, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action, the ninety-four recommendations also echoes the need for changes within our health care system and how services are provided to our people (The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015).

The contribution to the field of research is the uniqueness of this research to a specific geographical area and comes from the stories of our people and how we see our healing through the three laws: natural, tribal and Creator's. I utilized a story telling method within an Indigenous methodology to reach into our culture and ways of knowing from a subjective perspective. Our lived experiences have legitimacy in how we see our healing and they are intertwined in our stories of our history, knowledge, and culture within our traditional territories. I incorporated these laws as a way to show how the laws dictate all aspects of our lives, they are intertwined with all that we are, and all that we believe. Like the button blanket, all pieces have a meaning and a place and all are interconnected to support the entire blanket and the story that goes with the finished product. This research contribution has significance for our people in the North and implications to how we want to be supported in our continued healing.

The colonial ways of counselling practices are strongly rooted in Western thought and this includes the helping field. This issue continues to be an ongoing concern for our people. Change does not happen swiftly enough and for counselling practices to respond to this concern, which means Western practices need to work in collaboration with our people (McCormick, 2009) and the scientific community needs to recognize our traditional healing practices (Hovorka, 2015). The stories included in chapter four and in the appendices (see Appendix A) are intended to educate the mind and heart of counselling professionals and trainees in service of the goal to Indigenize counselling. When you practice from a scientific perspective “seeing is believing”, unlike traditional healing practices which follows “believing is seeing” (Hovorka, 2015). This problem remains unresolved in many ways for our people who want to access healing in our traditional ways because the present resources and knowledge is limited in focus.

Conclusion

The results of this study confirm and adds to the growing research around the healing practices of our people from the residential school experience. The focus of this study was central to the Yukon Indigenous people who attended these schools as first generation survivors. As a counsellor I wanted to explore and know what would be helpful for our people in the far north. As I searched for resources and studies particular to the north and our people there was very little published or scholarly writing done in the Yukon. This is not to say that possible independent research has been done or is happening as this research concludes. The findings are significant and important for helping our people in the Yukon. I chose this geographical location because this is where I will continue to advocate, support, and counsel our people. I hope to provide training, knowledge and experience to others in the helping field – Indigenous and non-Indigenous. I can only hope that the findings here will be significant and impactful to Aboriginal

and non-Aboriginal counsellors in the North in helping our people. This research can be used as a resource, as a means for change, for further research, and a learning tool to support all our people who are walking their Red Road. I wanted to plant a seed and the stories in this study does this, as stated by Poonwassie and Charter (2005):

A seed-thought is the conscious impression that comes into being that liberates our mind and livens our imagination. Seed-thoughts have transformation energy because they surprise our consciousness into a new way of seeing. Storytelling is the vehicle used by synergizers [storytellers] to communicate seed-thoughts (p. 20).

Chapter 6 – Walking with the Storytellers (Personal Notes and Reflections)

This research has been an amazing journey for me filled with an array of emotions. There were times I felt sad, happy, hurt, compassion, and caring. I experienced tearful moments, the surfacing of anger, and also laughter. As I listened with my three ears to all the stories from the storytellers my emotions came to the surface so self-care became paramount. There were times I had to put a feather on the stories and step away and do self-care. For example, I experienced anger as I read the stories of what had happened to our people in these schools and I wondered if this also happened to my brothers, sisters, and parents. My family has never spoken of the details of their experiences in these schools, nor do I need to know, but this was a trigger for me as I heard these details in the stories. At times there was laughter as the storytellers' shared funny moments. This is because through all of this our people have not lost their sense of humour which I believe is a part of our resiliency.

I have learned who I want to be as a human being and as an Indigenous counsellor to our people. This work and the research have always been heart driven. I have discovered through this research the connection and journey that we must all make with our heart and our mind. My spiritual connection has grown stronger as a result of this research experience and continues to strengthen. I feel all my relations around me and within me and I know I am never alone. The balance that I have always strived to maintain is stronger and I can feel this within and around me. It feels great! One of the things I have learned from this research is the 'power of stories'. That is, I realized that storytelling has a healing power for our people.

When I sat down for a third time to read Roger's story there was an energy that came to and through me with a powerful message, and instantly I knew I was not alone. The message came from my late father, and the stories he shared with me as a child had prepared me to listen

here and now with Roger's story. I was deeply moved and my eyes were filled with tears. In that moment I thanked my father and all my relations for I knew I was on the right path with these stories. My father used to tell me stories over and over, but I never grew tired of hearing the same stories and as I read each storyteller's stories repeatedly this was also the outcome. I truly do believe that there are reasons that we may not know at that time for what we experience in our past, our purpose, why we are here, and why things happen as they should but only come to light further down in our journey. This comes from my own personal experiences and how I see myself on my own healing journey.

I am so grateful and honoured to have had this opportunity to witness and experience the stories from all the storytellers. I have learned so much from this experience. The protocol's women follow within our nations is so important. I found through this research I learned more about what it means to be an Indigenous woman and the responsibilities we have in this life to ourselves, our family, and community. The importance of forgiveness especially when we are treated badly by others, instead we learn to pray for these people because they do not realize or know what they are doing or saying. I learned so much more about our ways of knowing, doing, and learning as I listened to the storytellers and this has further enhanced my own knowledge. The use of metaphors by our people has always been there and through this research I learned many more. I found the metaphors inspiring and enriching, this will be reflected in how I will use them in my personal and professional endeavours. My understanding of "blood memory" was further heightened by listening to the stories and discovering when the storyteller was speaking of how we never truly forgot our traditions because we carry them within our blood. We just needed to uncover them from the residue of colonization and the residential school contaminants.

Throughout this entire research experience, I discovered that I was decolonizing myself and the irony in this experience was it took me attending a Western university to do this! When I initially started my educational journey at this academy I did not know why I felt uncomfortable or why I did not completely fit, something just seemed off balance. It was not until it was brought to my attention that what I was experiencing was oppression and colonial influences. Once I realized this, I questioned whether I would continue with my education because I knew this would be a difficult journey. After speaking with an Elder I was able to put this into a perspective that allowed me to continue. I also realized that nothing in my life had ever “been easy” nor was I “privileged” and I wondered why this experience would be any different. So throughout my time at the academy, I always felt like I was walking up the middle of the river as everyone else went with the river. As I faced the many challenges of being in a Western academy as an Indigenous student I found it challenging to find balance within me. The further I went down this path the more I decolonized myself by including the aspect of my indigeneity into my studies and the research albeit while feeling and experiencing resistance from the academy. The biggest challenge was using an Indigenous methodology in an academy with Western research perspectives and influences - this was like trying to make a fire using water. What I learned through all this was how resilient I was, the support I got from our Ancestors, the power of prayer, the importance of ceremony, and that nothing was going to stop me from achieving my goal. I believe I am a role model, an advocate, a survivor, and a voice for our people – this comes from my heart.

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Appendix A – The Stories

Caveat Statement: The following stories have been changed slightly to protect and retain the privacy of third party locations, names and years mentioned by the storytellers. The names and places have been replaced with “[xxxx]” and the years with “[19xx]”. The names of the storytellers were all published as each storyteller with the exceptions of one storyteller [Grandmother] signed their consent forms to allow their names to be published within this document. At the request of some storytellers the grammar and spelling were corrected within their stories, otherwise stories were left as they were told to retain the nuances and innuendos implied in the stories. All storytellers were made aware of the reason for these amendments, changes, and all storytellers understood this process. Bold and italics were used within the stories to highlight where this researcher asked clarity questions, questions, and reflections.

Story 1: Roger’s Story

Okay my name is Roger Ellis and I’m from the Wolf clan and I’m Northern Tutchone. My mother was born in [xxxx]. I was raised in [xxxx] for a couple of years and then we moved to [xxxx] and that’s when I was six years old when I was taken from my parent’s house in [xxxx] and taken to residential school, and we were taken over to where it used to be old tour service, it was gravel, a big yard there with a big horse truck there with racks on it and all the kids were piled on the back of it.

The police came to our house and social worker and said how many kids do you have here and what ages are they? And it was only me and my sister and we were taken from our homes and we didn’t know what we did wrong, we weren’t told nothing. They just said we’re taking these kids and the police just told mom that if she interfered that she was going to go to jail. All I remember was screaming and yelling and trying to hang on to the door frames and but I was too small to fight them. So anyways we were taken over to the [xxxx] yard where they had a big horse truck there with lots of hay and horse manure all over it and we were put in the back of that truck and said we’re going to residential school and none of us knew what was going on and it was pretty horrible because a lot of kids were screaming and crying and back in 19xx there was only grave roads around here so that was from [xxxx] to the school it was all gravel road and we went down that dusty old road, and kids some of them were so scared they even peed themselves and pooped their pants, they were so scared. You know, and yet we weren’t allowed to do nothing, just stay in the back of this horse truck with racks on it.

Then when we got to the residential school they lined us up in front of the school and told us these are the rules: and they pointed to the trees which were maybe two or three hundred feet from the school, all around and said those were our boundaries, we are not allowed to go into the bushes and if we did we would get a strapping. They just said I’m the principal, this is the supervisor and teachers and if you don’t listen to them, or if you talk back you’ll get a strapping. So they pretty well laid out all the rules right from day one and we were all separated - girls from on one side and boys on one side. So they took us down into the gym they call it, or playroom area and we were all told to line up and strip and we said “What?” and they threw all our clothes in the garbage, cut our hair, de-lice us, yeah chopped all our hair off and we got brush cuts right from the beginning, and then we had all these plaid clothes, we had to wear plaid pants, plaid

shirts and the only thing that was different was the colors. It was blue, red or white. Anyways those were the clothes we were given and that's what we had to wear we had no choice. But we were not allowed to talk to our sisters or brothers, we were not allowed to talk to each other if we did we were strapped. We were not allowed to ask questions at all, or we got a strapping.

Then they lined us up and made us count one to one hundred because there was one hundred boys, and one hundred girls in the school. My number was seventy-three. I had that number so long; I've had it for six or seven years. Right from day one, they did roll call every day every morning and every evening. You had to line up in a line and they did roll call and if you didn't, if they called your number and you weren't listening you got a strapping for that, you had to listen and if you didn't you were strapped in front of everybody, and the sad part about it was whether you were a girl or boy, they took you in front of all of the kids, all of the girls and boys and made you drop your pants right there whether you're a girl or boy and strapped your bum right there in front of everybody, showing everything. You know it was like oh my goodness. I knew it wasn't right, but we were only kids and we couldn't say anything. It was embarrassing for everybody to do this and it was pretty horrifying for the kids that were watching because they didn't know why everybody had to do this.

So they put the fear of God into everybody right from day one and onward and if you tried to ask a question you got slapped in the head, or got your ears pulled, or your hair pulled. They had this big rubber belt probably two feet long, must have been couple inches wide, and maybe half an inch thick and you got a strapping with that and if it wasn't on your hand it was on your bum. It was pretty horrifying and scary to be there. Yeah it was pretty sad the way they treated us from day one and all the way through the years, the whole purpose was them trying to take the Indian out of us and that was the government's idea was to take the Indian out of us and make us white people and it was pretty sad because when I first started to eat, even my first meal there I didn't know what cereal was, or bread because all I ate was bannock and moose meat and wild foods, wild meat and when I see that I wouldn't touch it because I said "I don't know what that is" and I got strapped for that and I got sent to my bed - like they had a big dormitory of bunk beds and so I got sent to bed for that because I wouldn't eat. So a lot of us kids were pretty well starving because we didn't know what kind of food we were eating.

It was pretty horrifying and later on in the years kids were starting to talk about how the supervisors were bothering them and I didn't know what they were talking about. They said they are touching them, and fooling around with them. But one day I went to have a shower and I walked in there and seen the supervisor with this boy in there and I was shocked, and then he grabbed me and locked the door and started fooling around with me too and then he said "You say anything and I'll beat the crap out of you" so what do you say when you are seven or eight years old you know to an adult? "Or I'll kill you" its words like that, you don't ever forget. Anyways, I never said anything until when was it?

I went for treatment in 19xx, like twenty years later. After I got out of the residential schools, but they were pretty well the same, we had a little more slack at the second one because we were allowed to go downtown and stuff but we had to be back at a certain time, and if we didn't come back at a certain time then we were grounded. So that's when we started learning to trust. So if you wanted to be trusted to be allowed to go downtown again you had to be back, that we made

sure of. But I never got to go home for nine years, the whole time I was in residential school at [xxxx] they just made excuses that my parents couldn't be found, or they were drunk and they wouldn't allow us to go home. So we either stayed at the residential school or in group homes, or other mission schools in town.

So it was nine years before I finally went home and I was like fourteen years old and mom just called me little white boy because she thought I was avoiding her when I tried to explain what, and she was drinking a lot back in those days. A lot of the parents started drinking because they had no kids the village was empty of kids. A lot of them too, they never got to go home for years and nobody was told why. They just kept us there and everybody else got to go home and then we got strappings on our hands and that's why, to this day I still got joint problems and stuff like that. They were just; they could care less you know because a lot of them weren't even qualified teachers. A lot of them were just hired people to come and teach and all we knew was Tom, Dick, and Harry, and 1+1 is 2, simple stuff.

But when we actually came to [xxxx] in 19xx that's the first time they allowed Natives to be in with the public schools and that's when all the fights started and racism, white people against blacks or Natives and of course I was right in there too because that's when all my anger started coming out too because I hated white people cause they were the ones that abused us and beat us and everything. So I had a lot of hatred and anger against the churches and teachers, white people, black people because these were all supervisors' right. So if you weren't Native I didn't care for you, I hated you. But any Native, my family wasn't close to me because we weren't together a lot but yet the boys and girls in school were like my brothers and sisters. I grew up with those people and that was sad. I was so mixed up in my head, if this ain't my bro then why am I calling him bro? Or this girl there is my sister, I've known her for how many years, and then you're telling me she's not related to me?

Yeah, it was really confusing to a lot of kids and a lot of parents never did tell their kids who was related to them, so there was a lot of incest. First cousins with first cousins, or brothers with sisters, it was sad; it was like oh my god. But thank god mom told us who was what, because I was all ready to go out with this one girl but my mom said no that's your cousin and I said oh my god ok. And the only one that was really helpful to me over the years was my uncle. When I came home nine years later he said you're just a little white boy now, you're Indian he said this is what you should be doing and so he would take me out in the bush, we'd go camping or we do hunting and trapping, "this is your lifestyle" but I never knew what he was trying to get into my head. I just knew I was Native that's all, you know I didn't know nothing about my culture, my heritage, my language nothing, I just knew I was Native, then they drilled it into your head in the schools that Natives are no good for nothing, you'll never amount to nothing, you know you're thieves, your drunks and they drilled that into our heads and then that's when the effects kicked in after is when I left the school.

I got married in 19xx and in 19xx I lost a son and I couldn't grieve because I didn't know how. I wouldn't talk about it because it hurt too much and when someone asked me about my son I would just say no forget it, I don't want to talk about it, it was too painful but I didn't want to show it. I didn't know how, nothing about it and nobody taught us how to deal with grieving so here I am standing at my own son's graveside and I wouldn't break a tear and that was the

toughest thing for me to do was stand there at my son's graveside and to hold all that pain in just to prove I was a man because they said a man never cries. It was the toughest thing for me to do and everybody was looking at me like weird, this guy is not showing any emotions and they ask me after they said "How come you didn't cry or anything?" and I said "Why? I said "I'm a man, I said a man never cries" and they said how dumb is that, and I didn't know what they meant and so I was like why are they telling me this?

Because I had no clue what they were talking about and it's only when I went for treatment that's when I'd found out about all these effects that happened to me and it was like "Wow, is that what the school did to me?" That's when I found out, then it hit me like a brick, because my counsellor asked me, he says because I went for treatment in 19xx at a First Nation run treatment centre in [xxxx] [because of a violent event involving a family member]. After that cop [following violent event] left I went into the bedroom and I started loading my gun, a bullet for him, a bullet for [his] family and the last one was for me. I was literally going to go over there and start blasting everybody away because I was so angry when I found out from that cop that they knew about it and didn't tell us. I said how awful that was not even to warn us or tell us that this is what happened with him, but I was so mad I was literally shaking and I was just loading the gun then the oldest stepson walked in he says "Can I go hunting with you dad?" and I says "No this is one hunting trip that you can't" and then everything just clicked in and then I just dropped the gun and said oh my god what the hell am I doing. So I said I'm just going to go over there and deal with it, and so I unloaded the gun and put it away and then I walked over to the house and that's when I kicked open the door and I just seen him standing there and I just drove him, knocked him ass over tea kettle and his big brother was there like 6'1 or 6'2 and I said I dare you, any one of you to come near me I says "I will drop you, or I'll drop you or I'll kill you, one way or the other" I said either one don't matter to me and I just started yelling I said you bunch of assholes you knew he did this prior, what kind of fricken family you guys got here?

And I was so livid and that's when one of my friends said man you need help, he said you got a lot of anger there and I said of course I do. So they said well we'll set you up with a counselor they said and oh god he better have some answers, why this happened, you know why? I had so many like - why, why, why? So this friend of mine, he was a counsellor there and he came over and talked to me at the house there and said I will get you out asap for treatment, he says they'll have all the answers there for you and I said they better have, because I need some answers now and he said yep he said we'll get you asap on the plane and out of here and I said what about my kids, and he said we'll take care of them, don't worry. I went out for treatment and this was after the court case and the court case the guy got eight or ten years for that so I was happy and I said well it's not long enough, but its good enough and I said I want him to get treatment while he's in there but he never did. What his mother did behind my back after I went for treatment; went and got the lawyer, his lawyer to get it reduced to four years and he got out on good behavior so he spent like two years in jail and now he's back out in public.

We were out at the [xxxx] there once and I see him there and I said "what are you doing out here?" and he says "I'm going swimming" and I said my relative is in there because he was standing there I said if you go past me mister I said I'll drop you, I said my relative's in there and when they get out you can go in there but I told them at the front desk, so they went and told him to leave and of course the mother was just cussing away at me and I said you need to warn

people about your son, I said you're no help whatsoever and she was just cussing me down and everything, then they left. He just looked at me and he knew I was serious, I just looked at him dead in the eyes and I just looked at him and said "I dare you" and he just went turn around.

But that's when I went for treatment and that's when I found out about - how, because when I first went I argued with the counsellors in 19xx about why did this happen? They say are you an alcoholic? I said, "No I'm not an alcoholic, I go out and get drunk every night and go to work. What's the problem?" Oh you don't consider yourself an alcoholic? "No" so anyways I argued with him [counsellor] for two weeks about that. I said I came here to get answers for my relative, why this? Why that? So that counsellor he says you got a lot of anger he says, a lot of anger and hurt, he says do you want to tell me about where it comes from and I says I don't know where it comes from. People like you, you piss me off, oh you're blaming everybody he says and so who else is there? And he says okay I tell you what he says when you go back to your room tonight - he gave me a writing pad, eight and half by fourteen inches and he says write down what makes you angry and he says go way back into your childhood days, and my childhood days I says? Oh my god I said I can't think that far back and he says well just think about it he says. Try and go back to your childhood days, and what makes you angry and I says you want me to do that? And he says yes I do, so I said ok, I'll give it a shot. So I did that night and geez for a couple of hours I was tossing and turning there and what is it that made me angry and then I thought, I bet you it was the way I was treated in school, the punishments I had to do. I had to scrub stairs. Eight flights of stairs, four story high with a toothbrush. That was one of my punishments, and if it wasn't clean enough for the supervisor I had to start all over again. I had to get between every little crack and get every dirt piece out of there. So things like that, I mentioned in that letter. When I wrote it, I don't even remember writing what I said but right at the bottom it said I was a very scared child. That's the last thing I wrote and I was like oh my god, that's when it really hit me. It was like holy Christ, you know is that how bad the residential school affected me?

It was like my god, because after I wrote it then I took it back to the counsellor and I says here's that letter and it was filled and I just had enough room to squeeze it at the bottom there that I was a very scared child and anyways, he says well we got to go do our circle now and there was twelve of us in a group, women and men so and then he points at me and says now can you read your story there. Oh I was mad I said I thought this was between me and you only and oh he says I'm going to ask the group here, how many of you have been to residential school and geez five other people put their hand up and I was shocked. I was like wow really? I thought it was only in the [xxxx], I didn't know it was all across Canada or all over the world. I said oh my god, I said really so he said how many of you have been punished and abused and all of that and all of them put their hand up again and so I said oh my god, and so I said I'm not the only one and so I didn't feel alone there, because if I had started telling them, nobody would have understood me. So that's why I never spoke up before. Why am I going to tell you, you won't understand me and so I says okay now that I know that I said these people will understand where I'm coming from.

I remember when I first started reading the first couple of lines I broke down and I started choking up, I couldn't talk. I just getting a lot of chest pains and I just said I can't do it and the counsellor says and I noticed a bunch of big pillows and cushions in the middle with a garbage can there and everything and I said what's all that for? And he said go sit in the middle and I said why? And he says if you get angry just beat on those pillows and I said what do you mean

angry? He said well I can see there's a lot of anger in you and you need to get that out. How am I going to get it out? - can't just pull it out of me! You know I didn't understand a lot of that stuff and that's what was making me mad with the counsellor because I didn't understand what he was talking about. I said quit playing games here with me, I said speak where I understand what you're talking about. He said are you serious? I said I'm very serious, I said you're talking like I'm dumb or something I said, like I don't understand you what you're talking about, because I don't. You know when you're saying I have a million, or a thousand faces, or hiding my feelings, or getting my feelings out, or my anger.

I said I was never taught none of that in school or by my parents. I said my parents weren't around for nine years and I lived on the streets because my parents, my mom wasn't. We had a lot of disconnection after nine years. She called me little white boy and I was like, oh I said you're nothing but a drunk. So I took off went and lived on the streets for two or three years. I went down to [xxxx], I went down to skid row, those were my home and I learned to survive on the streets, stealing things out of the stores and then selling it for food, that was my way of surviving. But anyways when I did that, they asked me to talk about my story so I sat in the middle of the cushions there and then I started talking and I could feel the anger and he said just let it go, just keep going. He said if you get angry just beat on those pillows and all I remember was just getting angry, and the only thing I remember was just starting to yell and curse and then I blacked out and when I came to I just had puke all over my mouth and I woke up and I was just physically drained. I was just like exhausted and like oh my god what happen, everyone was just standing there just like looking at me with big eyeballs and oh my god, what did I do? Because I just blacked out and they said you were down there for a good half an hour, beating, cussing and yelling and swearing and everything and just puking your guts out. I felt so stupid, honest to god I was just like oh my god really I said that was me and they said yep and he said how do you feel now and I said I'm just physically drained, mentally and physically and he said yeah, you've got a lot of garbage out and I didn't know what they meant by garbage and I said well whatever it is, I said I actually am feeling better inside now.

Then a few days later we started talking about death and then they came around and they asked everybody if they had a member or someone that passed away and a few of them were talking and it just triggered me and I don't know how I expressed it or showed it but my counsellor just said, Roger did you lose somebody and I just looked at him I said yeah I did but I didn't want to talk about it. He said who did you lose? I said my son, but I'm just not ready for. And he said oh? And that was fifteen years later and I said listen I don't want to talk about it and he said well tell you what, you go and talk with an Elder so I said an Elder? And that's the first time I knew about all this spiritual stuff and First Nations culture and that because I never had anything to do with it before. I lived on the streets most of my life and I lived in the cities. The only thing that I knew about was hunting and stuff, but it wasn't my bag but yet my uncle always pushed it on me and now I can see why. Anyways, but after that Elder told me he says, I will give you that same full scape paper, pad and write down what you want to say to your son, well oh my god, I filled that whole page up too and so he says let's go outside and make a fire. So we did an offer of tobacco and that for the wood and that and I says what's that all about and he says well you got to offer, you're using trees from Mother Earth. So anyways I was like oh okay. So that's the first time I really started learning about these cultures and stuff and then he said can you read your story to me and we were sitting by the fire and I broke down and said "no I can't do it" and he

says “well we’ll try another day then, I don’t want to force you to.” So I said ok and we just said a little prayer and he smudged me down and that and I didn’t have a clue what that was all about and he said I’m just cleansing you and I said okay.

Then my counsellor when we were in the circle, he asked me to read that letter too and I was what the hell, I thought this was between me and that Elder. So he asked the group again how many lost members in the family and well Christ, eight people put their hand up, eight or nine people and I said oh my god, and he said see you’re not alone. So I said okay that’s comforting to know, so I said okay I’ll read it and he says do you want to sit on those pillows again and oh my god, not again I said. I says you can see all that anger in me yet? He says yeah I can and I said are you serious? And he said yeah I am serious that’s why I’m asking you to go sit on those cushions again. He said you got a lot of anger and hurt there, and I said I do. He said can you go sit in there and I said okay I will. So I started reading and I broke down again and he said don’t stop, just let it go. I didn’t know what he meant by letting it go and he says I said what do you mean let it go, he says just keep telling your story he says and if you feel the anger coming out just let it come out, don’t try and stop it. He said just beat on those pillows and do like you did when you told your story. So I said okay I can try that again, so I did and bang, I blacked out again and I awoke and I was exhausted again all of my face puke again, and everything and tears and I was like oh my god, I did it again and he was like “yep and then he said how do you feel now?” I said well now that I talked about it, which I never did, I feel a lot better now. He says yeah, you look good and I said really? He says yeah. So I said wow I said you can see that? And he says “yep”. So he told me he says you’re ready for that Elder now, so I said okay.

I went with that Elder again and he told me so he says read your story so I did and it wasn’t so painful, but it was still painful. I broke down and cried and that but I think I got rid of all my anger there like I was beating on those pillows for about 20 minutes they said, cussing God down and everything, why did you take him? Why didn’t you take me? Oh I was pathetic, but I got it out and this was fifteen years later. Now I can talk about it today and it’s, I know he’s in a better place now and it’s a good feeling. Anyways when I went and talked to that Elder after I read my story and he said now he says you take that letter and burn it. Your son will get that letter and when I put that letter in the fire it was like whoosh, instantly it was like a ton of bricks off my shoulders. I just went whew! and that Elder looked at me and he says there that ton of bricks is gone and I looked at him, you could see that? He said I saw it. I said oh my god are you serious? He says “yep, he said you have a glow on your face now. He says you’ve got rid of all your stress, your anger, your hurt. He said your son took it all. I said wow, I couldn’t thank him enough and we smudged again and I just gave him a big hug and couldn’t thank him enough.

That’s when my healing journey really started to begin then and so then I started helping others in the group. They were afraid to talk about it and I said well I’ll be right there with you and if you want me to sit beside you in the group I said sure I’ll be right there because support to me was such a big thing. I can’t stress that enough to people nowadays how important it is, even if you’re just there just with them in person not saying a word, that’s good enough for them. Little things like that, that’s where my counsellor told me support, can go such a long ways. So look at me, I supported you through this whole process, boy did you ever, I said the things you put up with me it was amazing honest to god. This guy was like 6’4”, big man- we called him our big teddy bear.

Anyways because when I first got there I was like, I didn't care what size he was, you know quit speaking such stupid talk here you know that I don't understand you, I am just going to kick you or beat the crap out of you and he was like wow, you've got a lot of anger. He was so patient with me, even when I threatened him. It was like going up against Goliath but yet he was a gentle bear. It was amazing this guy and I will never forget it. Last thing I heard was he went up to [xxxx] or somewhere he's working with kids up there too now. I would love to have seen him. I went back to the treatment centre in [xxxx] like ten years later and he asked me to come out and speak there and I did, and I said this is where I was reborn, and this is where I dumped all my garbage and I said this was a new beginning for me. I says oh I can honestly say that this was where my healing journey started here back in 19xx and thanks to all these people and I was like wow, I said I just pray that you guys take this same journey as I did and can help others in the future. It was like a standing ovation and it was like wow because I was just sitting in the crowd I was just there and then one of the counsellors spotted me and well we have a special guest here now and I was sitting there looking all around, oh who and Roger Ellis and what? (Laughs) I was just shocked and like whoa, but it was good to go back there because it was like home to me, it was like coming home, I felt good, I had a good feeling about that place, and I always did.

I'd highly recommend people to go there too and then a lot of them are wondering how they go about it and I just say well you go to your family doctor and get them to refer you for treatment and medical services will pay for everything- the flight down there, if you have kids they will take care of them and really? So a lot of them have done that now. Then I started working at the residential school society but then thanks to my brother [friend] who's passed on now, but we grew up together too in residential school and we've drank together and everything but he went for treatment too and he was asked by a bunch of people, thirty people who went forward to do a claim against the government for abuse and they started that whole process by going to court but my brother [friend] wasn't a counsellor then, he was just there to let people know that this process was going on that they could put a claim in too but after five years of doing it, they started in 19xx and then in 20xx he had to resign because he was a certified mechanic and he didn't want to lose his license so he asked me, he said Roger I've looked all over the place, he says I couldn't find anybody to fill my job except you and I says really? He says you're the man to do it. I'm going to put in a recommendation that they hire you and I said oh okay, I'll try it so he said I know you'll do well.

I remember that first day, mom was getting sick then and I had to go for an interview and we were taking turns looking after mom at home and I forgot all about her appointment and so I said oh yeah and it was when my interview was, I totally forgot all about it and I said oh no, I missed my interview, then I got a phone call the next day and they said oh you didn't make your interview appointment and then I said who's this? And they said this is the residential school society and that's where my brother [friend] was working and I says oh no, I said I totally forgot about it I says I was looking after mom, I had to take her to her doctor's appointment and they said well would you like to re-book and I said you're giving me a second chance and why not they said. They said we interviewed like six other people and your name was highly recommended by our coworker. I said yeah so they said can you make it tomorrow I definitely can so I said okay. So I went for the interview first thing I did was apologize for all that and I says, before we even start I would like to apologize and they said accepted. So we started

interviewing and they said only one person is going to be getting a phone call and the others will be getting a letter in the mail so I says okay. So they interview me and there was like three of them there and it was a good half hour interview anyways but that's when they asked me, why are you applying for this and I said well I have started my healing journey and so I want to help others and I said that's my life - my goal, is to help others and I said, of all ages, It doesn't matter what color they are or whatever I said I want to help them on their healing journey, I said I've been there - done it. They said oh okay, and then a couple days later I get a call? How come they're calling me? Did I get the job or not and so they're just talking away there, how are things going? Good and I said well who got the job? And then he said oh you forgot already? I said forgot what? Only one person was going to get the call. Are you serious? I just flipped out! Awesome and then I was just so happy, I was cruising around through town and I got a speeding ticket. (Laughs) I was just like, I said what a way to start the job, but it was good. I've been there sixteen years with them now but I resigned recently and retired.

So that's what I've been doing since March and I go around I joined up with this hand games society, we do hand games. We teach it, we live it and we go around to all the schools- high schools and elementary schools teaching it and we go to the communities and we teach it, or help organize an annual hand games tournament or we do it ourselves. We organize it, play it, teach it, everything with hand games we do it. I'm the Elder rep on the society and we have ten youth, nine and eleven on there - there's ten of us total. So anyways we've had that going for a few years now and it's been very successful and we're just getting ready for next weekends' tournament, the annual tournament coming up at [xxxx] out at the fish camp. So that's what we're looking forward to it starts on August 12 to the 14th yeah so that's going be a big one.

I sit on the heritage board too there's ten of us on that board, half First Nations and half non-First Nations and we go through First Nation council through the land claims agreement - that half First Nations members sit on any board, so that's what we do. But I've been helping a lot of people. Even when I was up in [xxxx] I was helping a few people up there too it's like younger people too, going through hard times so I'll sit there and talk with them. When it came to stuff like that I went out of my way to be there for them because they trusted me to be there to support them so I didn't want to break that trust. You know so I didn't leave them until I felt comfortable that they were safe and they were okay and I just gave them my cell number and said anytime, call me. I still do a lot of that, it's never ending but I love it.

That's me, because when I first started living on the streets and getting into fights and I didn't care who I hurt, that wasn't me and that's when my counsellor when I first went to get help at the village there, one of the counsellors there he says I don't think that's you Roger, he says there's like a bad person in there and I said what the hell are you talking about and he says it's like Devil inside you that you need to get out, and I was like wow really? And that's, so a lot of that stuff it's twenty-six years later now, that's how long I've been sober now and I'm still learning a lot. Here I am sixty-eight years old and I'm still learning but you know I love it, it's been a great healing journey for me and I still learn a lot from my Elders, and other people and I learn to ask questions. That's where, because a lot of the Elders say if you don't ask how are you going to learn? And well in school we weren't allowed to ask and they say well you're not in school no more, and I said you're absolutely right and so that kind of stuff I had to let go and a lot of them [survivors] said how can you talk about it? I said the more you talk about it the easier it gets, you

got to learn to let it go. It's not yours, it was never yours and don't blame yourself because you were only a kid. That's right too I said I couldn't stop nothing, I was only a kid. Yet I was blaming myself for all this happening and I was being hard on myself and then I believed what they told me, I was going to amount to nothing but I turned that around and I says I'm going to prove you guys different.

So I went in 19xx when I was on my own, I said I'm going to prove you guys wrong, I'm going to show you how I'm going to get educated. So when I left school, I got kicked out of school in grade eleven, so then somebody, oh one of my teachers she was an awesome teacher and she told me to go over to the college, or the vocational training centre and I said what's there and she said they have all kinds of technical trades there and she said I notice you doodling lots when you're in school, she said you like drawing three-dimensional stuff. I said well I'm just fooling around and she said well you got talent there, she says why don't you go to drafting she said I think you'd do well there, I said really? She said yeah if you want I'll take you over there and I said okay sure let's check it out. So I went over there and they said you need grade twelve to get into it and I said oh, well I don't have grade twelve and they said well you can take upgrading to get into it, take your eleven and twelve which is a year, so I says ok, and then you can register for the drafting course, it's a two year course so I says oh okay we'll try it and in 19xx that's when I took the upgrading in, 19xx I applied for the drafting course and in 19xx I actually graduated with a certificate. There were twenty-five in our class and only fifteen of us left and only three of us graduated and I was like wow, I came in second, it was like whoa my score was eighty-two percent, the one ahead of me was ninety-two percent and the guy behind me was seventy-eight percent I think and seventy-five was pass mark, it was steep. It had to be perfect or two years of teaching was shot. I was determined and I did it and I graduated. I did architect for probably ten years and I did quite a few houses, I did a few local businesses, a bunch of private houses, and duplexes so I did a lot.

And these friends of mine were getting married and they were really good friends of mine so I said you guys got a house? They said no, we're going to build one but we don't know how to design it and stuff. So I said well sit down here and so we sat down and we drew it out, I drew it out and I said what are you looking at so they showed me what they wanted and how they wanted the outside to look and that. So I drew up those plans and I got prints made of it, I had a bunch of them rolled up and because one had to be for the engineer and one for the city guys, electricians and everything, so we had to have all those copies. So I had them all rolled up in one big bundle and I got a big ribbon tied on it then I went to their wedding there and I handed it to them and they said what's this and I said that's your wedding present. They opened it up and oh they just cried, they said aww, they said you did this? I said yep that's for you guys. Yeah so that was pretty well the first good deed I did and it was a good feeling and so like wow but yet, I wasn't dealing with my issues then but yet I had that in my heart.

So when I was talking with that counsellor he said that's not you Roger, you know it's like there's a Devil inside you need to get out. I didn't know what he was talking about. I said oh wow that's scary to know. But anyways, then my counsellor was saying at the end when I finished treatment he said you know what it was Roger, you know what it was? And I said what? All that anger and you had that little scared child you had inside that adult body was being protected by you. I said wow, I said really?! He said yes you were protecting that little Roger

inside. I said wow. He said now you can let him go. I said holy mac, I said I've never looked at it that way. He said that's why all that anger was coming out he says, you didn't want nobody to hurt that little guy inside of you and I said what a good way of looking at it. So that's what I try and tell a lot of people now, I said you need to let that little guy go and say it's okay now. Like a lot of them residential people now even still today I tell them you can talk about it, you can tell people, you're not in residential school no more, you can let that go. It is okay to talk about it now you know, tell your story now. A lot of them have done that now but still there is a lot that aren't even ready for that yet, they're too scared where it's going to go with them, well it's your choice because sometimes you can do more harm than helping so that's where you learn to set boundaries and that's one thing I never did was abuse any women.

I never beat a woman, or never in any form because when I was a kid I watched my mom get beaten up all the time and I swore I would never do that and I live that to this day. I would sooner walk away from a relationship, an abusive relationship than do anything because walking away would hurt them more than me punching them, it would scar them, and I've done that with three relationships now. Well the first one, when I first got married it was my fault because I thought I knew everything about marriage, this is the husband's role, this is the wife's role so every time my wife asked me to help her do dishes or help with the kids, no, that's your job. I do my job. She sort of looked at me like what the hell is that about? Because she never did go to residential school, she was raised in a loving, caring home, so she couldn't understand my actions, or my anger and all that and she was getting scared of me. So every time, well why can't you help and don't need to fricken ask, I would just swear away you know. Maybe I was verbally abusive with her but I never touched her hey. Anyways, we....what the heck was I just saying now?

You were talking about your wife and....

Oh yes, anyways she got scared of me, like eight years later she was getting scared of me because I was getting a lot of anger was starting to come out, so she packed up the kids and moved down to [xxxx]. I didn't even know she took off, she waited until I went to work and then my sister would phone me and I got home and nobody's home and I didn't even look around to see if clothes were missing or nothing. I was just waiting around for the kids and wife and god where is everybody and night time and still nobody and then my sister calls me and says I just got a phone call from my friend down in [xxxx] that your wife and the kids are down there and I said what? I said wow, what the heck did I do wrong? I was blaming myself for, I was like wow I couldn't figure out what I did wrong but anyways that was the only relationship that I regret leaving because it was my own fault. I didn't know enough about relationships and that or dealing with my anger and stuff. Even scared my kids too because a lot of times I would be yelling at them and my ex-wife would say why are you yelling, why can't you just tell them what's wrong? Because I was yelled at all the time in residential school, I said that worked for me, so why can't it work here? It's like whoa, okay. So then when I got into two other relationships those were alcohol ones there, they were, the women were abusive and they were trying to beat on me and I was like whoa, this ain't right. So I just walked out of it and said I'm gone. I don't want to get to that point where I'm going to hit them or throw them around and call them b.i.t.c.h.e.s and stuff like that. So I just walked out and left them.

Now this one I am in now, my wife now she quit drinking after she met me and she's been sober since and it's been good because I supported her with it. She asked me when I first met her; she was broke up with her boyfriend there and said she was drinking so I asked her if, well why, what does it [alcohol] help you? And she [said] well kind of, and I said yeah it's like a stress relief hey? Yeah exactly, it makes me forget about all my pain and anger and all that stuff and abuse and I said oh he was abusive too? Oh yeah she said. So I started talking to her a lot and said yeah nobody needs to go through this and next thing we started hooking up and it was like three years later and then we got married and it's been great ever since. Like she sees me talking to other women that's the least of her worries and if I see her talking with guys, getting funny with guys that's the least of my worries because when we first started dating each other I knew a lot of women and I would give them hugs and that and she was like. I said when you leave a relationship you leave that garbage there and don't bring it into another relationship and I said if you trust me - trust me. Not say trust you but yet at an arms-length or something. I said you got to trust me one hundred percent because I said I know who I'm coming home to, and she said okay then. That's all I had to tell her and it's been like that since, she had to let everything go. So we've been helping each other out because she was second generation. Her mom went to residential school but she never did, she was raised by her parents and that but she dealt with all that stuff. But when I started telling her about my story then she said oh god, now I can understand why mom and dad were like that. She said they would never tell me, she says now I understand.

That's why I go around to the schools and colleges here and talk to them about it, you need to understand. Don't label them as Indians that will amount to nothing because a lot of them out there on the streets now they're labeling you now, even if you don't know them and I said that's because you were the abusers. I said enough is enough, it needs to quit, you need to understand, and help them. I said even if you say hi to them on the street, a little thing like that goes a long way with them. It's like somebody cares, and that's all you need, or just even a handshake, or a tap on the shoulder saying you're awesome. It shows them that somebody actually cares for them. That's why I stress so much about supporting. Don't label them I said how about if you were in their shoes-how would you feel? You know think about that next time you see a street person-what if I was in his shoes? How would I feel? If somebody walked by you, you don't even, you know - get off the street you bum or you thief or, I said they heard that enough at the schools, they don't need to hear it on the streets. I said it's not their fault they're on the streets.

So that's yeah but yeah I've been asked to attend a lot of these conferences on truth and reconciliation and we take clients down and we support them too. A lot of times I've helped out at these conferences with a lot of them telling their stories, I'd be there as a support person for a lot of them even if whether their strangers, I've never met them before and they want to come tell their story, I was there for them and I wouldn't leave them until they were one hundred percent and I made sure that they were not going to harm themselves or anything. That they were going to be safe and I still do that. It's like my friend, he's passed on now like he could see something in me that I didn't see and a lot of other people seen that too, even my counsellors at treatment they just said that's not you Roger and I said really. Then it was a hard thing to accept when they were telling me that, but now when people say wow you're doing a good job Roger I can accept things like that now with pride.

It's a good feeling knowing that my work is being acknowledged and hopefully they can carry it on too. I talk to a lot of the kids too like that, and I still do that even if I'm retired, I guess my work is never done (laughs). Yeah I find a lot of the communities need to deal with grieving though. There's a lot of grieving been going on lately and a lot of suicides, young people and that's where a lot of them really need help, in the communities. It's not so much here in town it's out in the smaller communities, all this is happening, there's not enough counsellors out there. I find that families just don't have the time with their kids, or make the time, and that's what needs to be said out in the communities. If your kid is hurting listen, take the time to listen. Kids are trying to give you a message and you're not listening to them so what else is there to do? You know if they don't listen, nobody else will listen so they go to the last resort you know-suicide and that's sad. So many young people have gone that route and a lot of them I have known personally but I really have to talk to a lot of the family because they feel they were robbed and I said yeah, I said when a kid takes his own life like that unexpectedly he was trying to reach out but nobody was there, I said don't blame yourself for that though. I said you need to let all of that go, because you'll be carrying it for the rest of your life, blaming yourself and that's what I did with my son, I said I carried that around for fifteen years blaming myself, why God, why did you let him die instead of me? I felt guilty about it and everything for fifteen years and when I dealt with it I said I could talk about it today. Now it doesn't bother me. Sure the pain is still there, but not as painful. It's like a piece of my heart went with him but still, before I couldn't even talk about him but now, dealing with my abuses and stuff I said I can talk it. It was never mine. I couldn't have done nothing about it; I couldn't have done nothing about it. All I could do was forgive the abusers and the people that abused me and I said you got to learn to let go. I said that's a tough thing to do but once you do it, you're going to feel better about it. But yeah it's, that kind of stuff - if I'm in the community things happen there I try and help out.

So I was close to this family out in one of the communities there and they asked me to be a pallbearer for their mom and I said yes and the two daughters were hurting pretty bad and the oldest one there lost her son not too long after, oh man she started drinking a lot and I really had to talk to her I said you know, it's not your fault it happen, it was an accident. You can't be blaming yourself because you weren't there for him. I said I don't know, maybe your mom decided to call him. I don't know what it is but you know I said you couldn't have done nothing about it anyways. You can't be with him, protecting him twenty-four seven. He was an adult, a young adult. So she's doing a lot better now and we're doing her (mom's) headstone next month so she asked me to be one of the spirit house builders too and I said yeah, that would be an honour for her mom and her son. I said yeah and hopefully you can put some closure on it, once the house is built and you dealt with that, then you can just let it all go and just cherish all the good memories. I still tell a lot of them to do that.

Friends of mine down in [xxxx] just lost a bunch of people down there too, like three people, three more, young people too. One ten year old, eleven years old and two twenty-something year olds it's like my god. So I've just been talking to them lots too down there. It's good, I feel really good when I talk to the Elders too because they really ground me and its good. I always feel good when I talk to Elders or if I don't understand I'll offer them tobacco and say I need to ask you a question you know and ok. So a lot of times if I do have questions I'll ask an Elder and its' good.

I pass all this on to my kids too and say this is our culture and it needs to be carried on and they wonder why I don't move down to [xxxx]. If I move down to [xxxx] I said I won't feel grounded. It a big city and I'm not used to cities. I love being next to Mother Earth here and mountains and everything. They say we'll we've got mountains down here, it's not the same. They were raised in the concrete world those girls but they're all doing great; they're all working and with their own places so it's the least of my worries. So it's great. When I went to my youngest daughter's graduation down there in [xxxx] and they ask if any parents want to get up and say anything and oh I said God I got to do this so I said I'll go up there, I went up there and I was literally holding the mic shaking and I looked at my daughter and I says congratulations I would never have missed this in a million years to be here for your graduation. So I said I'm glad to be here and then I looked at my ex-wife there and I said I want to thank you for raising our daughters the way you did, I said you raised them in a healthy way. I said if they were with me God knows where they would be today. I said, please forgive me for the way I treated you when we were married. I wasn't the person I am today, I said that person's gone but I said here I am today a new person on my healing journey and I just want to thank you for the way you raised our children and she acknowledged me and said thank you and the girls too. Because we had a lot of bitterness between us when we first split up, their mom was telling them I left her because I didn't love the kids and that and oh my god, really hurtful things and I said I've never said a bad word about your mom to you guys when you guys were with me because you guys are having a hard enough time dealing with our separation visiting your mom and then visiting me. I said I didn't need to add to that pain, I was just spending quality time with you girls. I said I don't need to call down your mom and stuff in front of you. That wouldn't be me as a dad and I could never do that. After we split up I said I could see what a caring mom she was with you girls and that's why she said hurtful things like that to me was beyond me and they didn't believe me so I had to call her mom to have a family meeting in the house so I said now please explain to the girls why you did this and she just broke down crying and said because it hurt me when you, when I left you, that I had to hurt you too, she said I lied to the girls and she apologized to the girls. The girls really had a lot of anger against me after we split up and it was like whoa, what's going on here? But yeah we got all that straightened out now and she's re-married and I'm re-married and yet we're still good friends because of the kids. Even my wife gets along with her and her husband, so we all get along great now.

Its things like that we had to let go and move on for ourselves and our kids. We try to pass stuff on like that along to couples that are going through their hard times, or losses and we try and support them in any way that we can. Because me and my wife we do a lot of that, she helps her family a lot, like she went to support her cousin for her loss. She took time off of work to go with her, yeah so it's something we love doing and it will never stop. The only thing the girls have a hard time, my girls, is they lost their grandpa in 19xx so that's what – twenty-six years ago? So anyways they lost him, back then he was ninety years old that was their grandpa but they were really close they were just young but they still remember him. They have a hard time letting go of that. They still hurt every February 14th when he passed on, right on Valentine's Day. They don't even celebrate Valentines no more. Yeah. Then I go and put flowers on his gravesites from the girls for them. I don't know is there any other questions or anything?

No, I don't think I have any questions. I guess the one question I would have but I think I've already gotten the answer from what you've said, I'll ask it anyway. What have you done to

maintain your healing? Do you feel like there are things you have to do to maintain or do you feel like you're at the stage where it's just changed for you completely and you are okay with everything?

Yeah I'm okay with it I'm always seeking new ways on my healing journey. Like I said if I hear about stuff I don't understand or things I need to do I'll talk to an Elder about it but otherwise I'm pretty comfortable. I don't need to look to drugs or alcohol anymore, that's the least of my worries now. Wasn't me - it was to drown out all my anger and pain and stuff from the residential school but now that I've dealt with it all, it's out of my life too, I let that go too yeah. Even the wife is like that too, she's let it all go and she doesn't need the alcohol in her life anymore too, yeah.

Story 2: Barb's Story

Hi my name is Barb Hume, Barbara Hume. I was born Barbara Jim I am of Southern Tutchone and Tlingit ancestry. My mother was Crow, so I am also Crow. My mother was from the [xxxx] and [xxxx] area in the Yukon and [xxxx], Alaska. My father was Wolf and his ancestry comes from [xxxx] and [xxxx], Yukon. My maternal grandmother's named is the name of a creek by where she used to live on the Alaska Highway between [xxxx] and [xxxx], Yukon. Both my grandfathers, like my grandmother's first husband and he came from [xxxx] Lake and he passed away, when my parents, when my mom was young and her brothers and sisters. My grandmother had to I guess [marry her late husband's brother] his brother, like even though they didn't have the same last name and he was the younger brother it was tradition that he had to take over his brother's family and raise them as his own. So he became my mom's stepdad, or her father. She didn't call him anything other than dad, just so it wasn't a stepdad or anything. So when he died, my grandmother met another man who was a Frenchman. He's the grandfather I'd known for about thirty years until he succumbed to cancer in the early 19xx's.

So I think it's necessary, and I know it's my own healing journey. I think it's necessary for me to start at my younger age because from birth until I was six years old I lived what I consider a very healthy lifestyle. Our family was grouped, we were very familial and also they are all part of a bigger community. So the area we, that I'm most familiar with at that age was what they call [xxxx], [xxxx] at [xxxx]in [xxxx]and we'd walk. We had a homestead, we had cabins at [xxxx], which burnt in 19xx or 19xx I think. I was quite young. We were at [xxxx] fishing then and we could see the flames from the smoke coming from [xxxx] and my grandmother and my cousin ran all the way to [xxxx] to see if they could salvage anything but I think she said she was able to pull a trunk out of her house and then her, all the houses at that time were burning and I think that was all that they had saved.

But I remember that life being the healthiest because we all had a family, we all lived, hunted, and we travelled together. We kinda went with the seasons. During the winter we would stay at [xxxx] right on the highway there, actually there's a gravel pit now where my family had just on the left hand side of the gravel pit at [xxxx] is where our homesteads were. Like all of grandma's children we had houses there. My mom, my parents had the biggest house, my grandmother had a small house and that's where I stayed with my grandmother because my mom always had smaller children and she had fourteen children and if you were able to walk you had to walk because there's nobody packing you because my grandmother and my parents would be packing somebody smaller than me. So I had to walk.

During the winter we would trap squirrels and sell them and one of my fondest memories of that was when my father was trapping and then he was taking some squirrel skins into [xxxx] to sell and to bring more food and it wasn't just squirrels. My grandmother showed me how to set the poles up and how to snare them and how to skin the squirrels. This is all before six and then I think I had three squirrels and I gave them to my dad to sell them for me when he went into town and he came back with a car. He came back with an old, I don't know if it was a...I think it was an old Austen. Well it was new, it was brand new but old to us and he came back with that vehicle and I didn't get anything for my squirrels so I think at an early age I learned how to really voice my... like be a smarty pants or something (laughs). Anyway my dad was a little bit

upset with me one day and was scolding me and I said, and I just looked at him and I said “if you don’t treat me right, and you’re mad at me, if you don’t treat me right I’m going to take back that car because you bought it with my squirrel skins” (laughs). So I believed that because he didn’t bring me any candy or anything back, or money, I believed that the squirrel skins bought his Austen (laughs) yeah that was one of my kind of coolest memories, and I remember the layout of the cabins. My grandmother’s brothers had cabins, and others had a tent frame I think and auntie I think had a cabin. Auntie and uncle - they had a cabin. Yeah and my other auntie and uncle had one there as well. But I remember the, we call it the big house, and my parents, and it wasn’t very big because there was a cook stove and then there was a single bed behind it and there was a double bed here, and there was enough room for a table and a little shelf and there was no room for chairs and I remember that they had a, one of those - they used to call it a gramophone? It was a kind of like those players and you had to wind it. I’m not sure how they called it but that sounds about right and they used to have to wind it and it played seventy-eight big records and I don’t remember, probably an old time country singer, something I don’t remember the music that they played on it and I remember my sister, being just a little bit older than me, she used to like playing with that.

I stayed with my grandmother and we just had enough room back there for a single bed or whatever in her little back room and the table. I don’t know if she had any chairs in the front room, there was enough room for a table and a stove. So it was very simple and... very cozy. Yeah she was very modest, I tell people the way things are. I think I was raised like that (laughs) and grandma says you better go up to the big house because I’m gonna have a bath, and you don’t tell people either. So I marched into the, this is my grandmother telling me, she said I marched into the house and said you’re not allowed down at grandma’s place because she’s having a bath and oh she was mad. (Laughs). She was mad at me because I just told it like it was (laughs) but I bonded really well with my grandmother. I remember walking with her, she would walk from [xxxx], you’re familiar with [xxxx], so when you drive around that big corner and you get to [xxxx], that’s got to be at least three miles or something and we would walk and set traps down there and then we’d have dinner camp there and come back and we, or whatever gophers we got from the setting of the trap the day before and we would singe them there and gut them and then we would pack them back. She had a little packsack that had a double strap, it was cute. It was big enough for a moose heart, I remember that because I had to pack one once and we would go back and I remember we’d live on a lot of [wild meat].

When we were at [xxxx] it was like we would eat a lot of rabbits and eat a lot of gophers during the summer and we’d have, for water we’d have to walk down to, there was a, not where [xxxx] is now but there was straight across from our houses we had a little trail that went to where they had spring water, it was good water so we’d bring that back and I don’t know how many trips we had to make but we had to have enough water for every house. Yeah, and sometimes the kids, I would be surprised at how young we were and our parents and grandparents would let us walk by ourselves, they would say oh the kids have to go get water and away we went, and it probably wasn’t very far, but I thought it was quite a long ways, so anyways. Yes it was kind of a good life. What I experienced is that love, and the sharing and everything from all of our aunties so it wasn’t just my grandmother that was raising me, my mom, my aunties, my uncles, they all looked after all the kids and of course my cousins, we all bonded really well, yes especially our age group. The older kids were sent off to residential school, and we, the younger ones I

remember bonding with others in our community, me and my sister. The four of us we would do a lot of things together, yeah

So it was very much a community that raised all the kids and looked out for each other?

Yeah, yes. They hunted together, and they harvested berries and other things. We would walk in the spring, my grandmother, I think we'd move to, we always didn't stay at [xxxx], we'd move to, she had another cabin at [xxxx] or [xxxx] or whatever they call it, and we call it [xxxx]. We would spend most of the summer there. Yeah, as young as we were grandma would let us row the boat for her and we didn't have any life jackets and neither of us knew how to swim, and I don't know if grandma knew how? I doubt it. But we'd all be out in the boat and we'd row for her, so we were very young and she had to pull the fish net and then we'd bring all the fish back over to the cabin and she would dry them. Yeah we had fish for breakfast, lunch, and supper (laughs) or sometimes we'd get rabbits.

It was really nice, I have dreams now about [xxxx] and about that, just coming out to where our cabins were and we'd just come out to the [xxxx], and I have dreams about standing there and looking off and sometimes it's really good dreams and sometimes it's not very good dreams but yeah (laugh), yeah so sometimes I'd have some good dreams about that area. I have another cute little story I remembered. Grandma used to set poles and she'd make hooks just out of a string and stuff and the water's fast enough there so that she'd sew a piece of whitefish or something, a tail or something on to this hook and then she would throw that hook into the water. So I made one, I made my own pole and got some string and sewed a tail onto the fish hook and it was, the current was kind of fast enough that it would bob up and down and I think every ten minutes I would go check it to see if I got a fish and then I did get a fish and it was a big pike and I screamed my head off, because I didn't know what to expect. I didn't know what we were going to catch and grandma thought I fell into the water or something and she just come running and I just got a fish (laughs) so we pulled it in and yeah, it was a big fish and I think that fish might have been bigger than I was, it was taller than I was. It was cute.

I spend a lot of time with her and I thought everybody's grandma behaved the way she did. She would get up really early in the morning and she'd always be looking to the east, towards where the sun comes up and she'd always say "Good morning, good morning, good morning" like three times and then sometimes she would sing and this is anytime during the day and it was almost like she would go into a trance when she sings, so it must be a healing song, or prayer song or something like I said, I thought everybody's grandma did that and I found out later that wasn't so. But yeah, it was in a word, I think just so tranquil. You know that life there with her and she would tan hides, and sometimes my cousins would come and their family would come and so she would, they would be tanning skin or fishing and my uncle, and then later my other uncle her second husband would take us to [xxxx].

Before we used to have to walk, we walked to [xxxx] we called it [xxxx]. Their first camp, and because we were walking it would take longer, so we would have kind of like a day camp part ways and the first camp, they call it [xxxx] river camp I think? Right as soon as we come to that camp, right off to the right hand side was where my family always camped and we'd have fly tents and later on when we had vehicles we had white walled tents there. But we'd stay for

weeks at a time. I think the men would go to the mountains sheep hunting or moose hunting and then the women would stay behind and we would pick cranberries, and again fishing, we'd love to. I don't know how they trusted us, we were quite small and we'd use a fishing pole. It's like fly-fishing. We'd use a fishing pole, a string, and a safety pin and catch dragonflies and that's how we got our grayling. Yeah, and we were always by water and we always, I don't know, they trusted us. They let us go down there and I couldn't, oh I would be so afraid right now to let my grandchildren go down there, even they know how to swim but I still would be kind of, you know I think the current is quite fast yeah.

I remember a story my aunt got a moose so all the women had to go, and this must have been during the summer holidays because all my older cousins, they were all there so, they were younger too, so all the women had to go with, to go help auntie bring the moose back because all the men were out. They were gone for days at a time, looking for, gone further than where these women had to go and so they went to get the moose and they told our cousin, they said you stay here and you watch all the kids and keep them close to camp and if anything comes around you put them up the tree, like they were thinking bear because there were lots of berries so there would be bear, so he says okay. Anyway they come back and kids running around just like crazy and they were playing tag and whatever and they were all there, like we were all there and I must, I had to be really young then and they [women] said where's your cousin like all of these kids and here he was, he was up the tree the whole time (laughs). He was the only one that was old enough and he stayed up in that tree, it was so funny. And then to hear grandma tell that story, I can barely remember it because you know I was quite young, I may have been a toddler, maybe three or something, I wasn't very old. And then another one of my cousins, she lives in Alberta. She brought a baby cub, a little black bear home, back to the camp and she said look grandma I found a little puppy because we'd wonder off into the bush picking cranberries and she found this little bear, thank goodness the mother was sleeping or it must have been, because grandma hollered at her "Take it back! Take it back!" She knew that a bear, a mama bear would be very angry. So she did, she came back and nothing happened or anything just (laugh).

So then we would, we'd move on. We'd go to [xxxx]; it's such a beautiful place. It's such a beautiful spot where the campground is of course, where grandma's campground is again, there's the main wharf, and then the inside wharf is just right there where her camp was. We'd always camp right there and we'd had fishnet and so forth set out they always had. I can't remember must have been maybe the adult women set the fish net out on the lake. Some of the older kids knew how to swim, so they would swim, I never did learn. So I didn't, I wasn't crazy like them. But those were really good memories, the family, like we got to know, I bonded really well with, like our extended family and certainly our Elders, I mean their grandparents, parents, aunts, and uncles, we all lived together, did things together it was so healthy.

And then I think we were just trying to remember where, I think we went into [xxxx] and I was at my aunt's and I did not know how the people from the mission school knew where to pick me up, unless they just, that's just where Native people lived at [xxxx] or at [xxxx] or wherever. They would go and they would pick up all these kids. Yeah they picked me up and took me to mission school and I remember just crying and crying because they had a different dorms and I think mine was a D dorm and my older sister would be in B or something, and our cousin so we never had anything to do with the kids in the older grades, we never got to see them. Well except

when we go to eat and I remember our dorm was the bigger dorm. There were smaller children and they had, when we were home we didn't have flush toilets and all that but they had this at the, I think I don't know if there were honey buckets or, I can't remember but I know that they were indoor toilets and they had showers so they must have had flush toilets but they were locked after a certain time at night so I remember the dorm this stench you know like with either kids wetting the bed or kids peeing in jars or whatever. I remember they had these little jars, you know they had bunk beds and they had a little ledge that was between this row of bunk beds, and that row of bunk beds and I remember seeing something like that and I was only six years old and I think I turned. I may have been six when they got me and turned seven in December or something like that yeah.

I never experienced lack of food before until I went there. I think they were so poor, and there was so many children and they didn't get much you know is what I gathered later, but I remember having soup that was just clear, like broth, and there would be just one bean or something floating around in this soup and that's what we would eat. Later I don't know if it was at that residential school that some parents started bringing rabbits or something like that in and I think sometimes we'd have liver. So some of the bigger kids became quite bullies, there would always be some older kids and I remember this girl and she was sitting right beside me and oh she dug her hands into my legs, and she was just like a bully and she took all the food that she considered really good off my plate and I had to eat things that I didn't like, like liver and I find it difficult still to eat liver. There wasn't very much food, and I remember they would give us a snack, because kids were hungry and they had a root cellar and they would dig out these snacks and I remember the figs had worms in it sometimes you know and the wieners kind of stink, like it was raw wieners and it kind of tasted stale or something but I remember they were giving those as treats.

And very strict, I remember the principal being very strict and they had what they called devotions. You know bible readings and storytelling because they'd have to, we couldn't read so they'd have to tell us stories. They would come in at night after dinner or something and they would come in and tell us these stories and we would have to pray and sing a bible song or something and I remember that we got to go to skate and somebody helped me because I didn't know how to tie shoelaces, I was only like six. So when I put on skates I had a hard time, I couldn't get the skates off, I didn't know how and so I was late for devotions and got sent to the principal's office and I remember that belt having to be almost, I could be exaggerating but I thought it was more like an inch and half to two inches wide and it was quite thick and I had to hold my hands out and he just, gave me my, it bruised my hands, you learned how to, as soon as you heard the bell whatever you learned to get to your spot as quickly as possible boy I didn't want to, to experience that pain and so I always kind of kept in the back.

My grade one teacher and she had a system where if you did really well she put your desk up front, like she had a row and it was according to how well you did and I remember being in competition with a couple of other kids yeah. She'd always put either me first or one of them boys and so I think the competition made me do well in school because I picked up really quick yeah. Another, sort of highlight and I didn't know it was at the time but was when the Queen came to the Yukon and I was chosen to present her with flowers, it was kind of, the only drawback was that I had to stay longer than other kids and I had to learn you know the proper

etiquette of how to curtsy and all that stuff and she was pregnant I think when she came up with one of her kids and so I got chosen to do that and then I think at this time my mom had moved to [xxxx] because the houses burnt down and there wasn't really enough room at [xxxx] and they had a house at [xxxx]. I think the army moved a house there for them and they just used, my grandmother just kind of used it more than my mom did and so my mom had a tent frame first and down where the old village is now, like she had a tent frame, her and my dad's sister and so our two families stayed down there in a tent frame. It was good. Then I got to, well when I was in grade one, my teacher, she didn't put me, like she didn't pass me into grade two she passed me into grade three so when I went to residential school the teachers there said you're too little to be in grade three, we'll have to move you back and I think that's where I got really traumatized, was at residential school.

They scared [me] my first day again, it was kind of like trickery I think and they picked me up at my aunt's place and the principle or administrator drove me, he drove me to residential school, and I had never been to residential school in my life and when I got there the girls were really mean because I was like a newcomer. They had already been to school together from grade one and the only person I knew was my cousin because she was the same age as I was so I stayed pretty close to her.

Yes, my first day, my aunt was part of their bribery I think. Trying to make me feel good, gave me a bag of blueberries and one of the older kids pinched a hole in it so when I was walking up this concrete stairs up to the washroom it made blueberry stains on it. So here I was, my first day at residential school and a toothbrush and I had to scrub the stairwell with a toothbrush and again I think I was like maybe seven, going on eight, when I went there so very young, all new to me. I didn't know about cleaning supplies and we had to clean and then they took us into the bathroom and they cut our hair like it was really short and put white powder all in our hair, and I found out later they were trying to delouse like the kids and so they put some kind of a powder in your hair and then they scrubbed us. I can't remember, some people say it was almost like a bristle, the scrub brush was like a wire brush, but I can't remember what it was but they just scrubbed until you were just in so much pain and I don't know why they did that, or what they thought we had like whatever it was, it wasn't degrading at that time but later when you get older you know how that feels you know, to be treated like that and at that time it was like a culture shock, it was just a shock to go through, devastating.

Oh yes, and then they were, the girls were saying you got to watch out for these, this and I don't know what it was but they named a name and it ended up being a guy's name, later when I got older, but I was petrified of, at the time, I was petrified that this person was going to come and take me. I couldn't sleep at nights and they had rows of little beds that were small like for small children and they had rows of them. They had one side of this dorm was deemed, for the juniors and they had one row on this side where the juniors continued, and then they had intermediate in the next age group. So it just happened that I was right by the window and I was just petrified and my cousin was just in the bed beside me and I would crawl out of bed and I would climb into bed with her just about every night and I was just so scared. And my older sister she must have had, she was there briefly she was at mission school but I hardly got to see her and she was in the intermediates kind of got mixed in with some of the seniors. The senior's dorms and so I was in another dorm and so I didn't get to see her much, and then she got sick. She had tuberculosis and

other things and she got rheumatic fever at residential school, probably at residential school because they didn't look after it and she had a whole lifelong bout with [heart] valves you know, like her heart problem where she had to have a valve change. She did it and needed it a fourth time and didn't survive and she passed last year.

Yes, I was sorry to hear about that, I was in Vancouver when I heard I knew your sister really well, I really liked her and her husband. How is he?

He's in a home now, it's all self-contained units but I think down by [xxxx] so he's able to get out. I think he has a mobile wheelchair and he can go out, down to the mall and just meet people and kind of move around that way.

He must really miss her.

Oh I do. She's was the closest to me because she's only a few years older maybe three years older than I am and then my cousin was kind of like a big sister to me, she looked after me pretty good and I remember residential school being so strict, more so than mission school and the fact that I had been to mission school I use to get beaten by other girls because I did go to mission school and telling me that they served you food, and they didn't have very good food and served you in rubber dishes and all sorts of other things that they. So yeah the girls weren't very nice, I thought they were pretty vicious and there was a teacher, I can't remember, I remember she used to be really short, but I remember it being so strict. I've had other friends, like my two twin friends and she just doted on them, she was just, she really liked them but with most of us, I didn't feel loved at all. We had numbers, they didn't call us by our name and I can't remember to this day. I don't know whether I mentally blocked it out or whatever, but I can't remember what my number was. Most people do, I remember my cousin's number was seventy-two but I can't remember what my number was. And she would have this whistle and within seconds after that whistle was blown you had a certain spot in this line up, the different lines and you had to be there and you couldn't look, you couldn't move your head around to look at other people, you can't talk to anyone and she'd always have the book, and she would be watching everyone and she'd be writing.

So it's almost like the fear factor, she was, you never know week from week whether you were on that list or not, because the students on the list there were a couple of things that, you didn't get to see the movie or something like on the Friday night, or Saturday night and then you also got a strapping after supper on either a Friday or Saturday night I can't remember what it was but you didn't know. You didn't know if your name was going to be on that list, yeah. So we always lived in fear, and why I think I was so afraid of that place was there was these three young girls, I think they were maybe fifteen or sixteen because I think after you're sixteen you're of age they kick you out or whatever and you get to leave the school and these three girls ran away and of course they went down the railroad track heading to [xxxx] and the police had police dogs and they brought those girls back. So when they, to discipline them they had to take their clothes off in front of everyone. I don't know if there were one hundred kids in that school, like half boys and half girls and they just whipped them. The principle or administrator just whipped them with his belt, I don't know they must get these leather belts that were kind of like real leather straps I guess more than belts, but they just whipped them and I often wondered if they were on their

moon [period] how embarrassing would that be? For the most of us, and myself I just put my head down and I was so, I was shaking so bad. You know, you don't know whether to cry or what. I don't know what I did. Maybe I was in a bit of shock or whatever.

So when you see something like that you're going to live that fear that's going to be added to why you're afraid for years to come. So I had to stay there for three years. I remember another time where I went into the same teacher that told me I was too young to go into grade three and then by Christmas time I actually did go into grade three but I was in trouble for something, and I don't know what it was and I remember going up. I was so scared that I remember going up to her desk and I can't remember who the teacher was and then it's like I had no control over my bladder I just peed like right on the floor and I couldn't stop and then of course some of the boys were giggling away and everything but I think when I looked at a couple of the girls, they were just mouth wide open but for me it was I think the fear, yeah. That's something that I never forgot.

I tried to do things too, to please them so when we'd go to church or something I'd sing really loud or I'd try to carry a tune or whatever and then I got put on a choir. So I tried to be good that way so they would not focus on me, and then we were of course we were all out, when we had some outdoor time some of the older girls knew how, because everybody was hungry kind of, we were hungry and so some of the older girls would go out and they knew how to set, they knew how to make snares and so they would snare either gophers, or snare rabbits and they had tin can, they made fire in the bush and they would cook, they would cook out in the bush and make tea or whatever. They'd go out into the bush and make that.

There were some First Nations people that were working in that school which was really good for us because we bonded with them, one lady she's from [xxxx], she married somebody from [xxxx] I think. So she would, they started getting the community to bring fish in and rabbits and so they started to make that and then another lady from residential school, she worked in the bakery and then she would come she would always ask me to come in and help her make pies and you know just different things. For me I think that was kind of a saving grace because you learn to survive and so forth, yeah. I can't remember. A lot of things I just block out that I've never, ever been able to remember. I've tried, when they had the common experience I got that funding but I tried the litigation one and for some reason I just have a mental block and I can't remember you know different periods of my life in residential school yeah. I did not like that school whatsoever. Oh my god, that was the worst I think for me.

My siblings were less fortunate than I was, because the younger siblings they were baptized so they had to go to [xxxx] and it took the longest time, I think when I, it took me a long time to come to terms with that because I knew what that meant for them and the amount of physical and sexual abuse was great. I think, I didn't know of any that happened in the schools I went to although there was but I just wasn't aware of them and the physical abuse, I saw that but I didn't see the sexual abuse. Later we heard rumors you know about the principle or administrator at residential school but for my siblings, the younger siblings I understand why they had such a hard life with alcohol and drugs and not able to take care of their children and not able to have any, I have two siblings that could not have any children which is pretty sad. I think the first time that I heard about that school I think I cried and cried because we started having circles in our

community and I was involved in the social development for our First Nation government and we started talking more about residential school and in the, probably in the 19xx's the early 19xx's and I think that's about when I started my healing journey because I thought the more we talk about it, the more I have to come to grips with it and I remember some of my. One of my siblings, not my siblings, one of my cousins that didn't go, she went to the dorm or something in [xxxx] and she was really upset with me. She says you can't tell our story, you can't bring it out in public, it's so you know. I said well it's everybody's story, you know, I said it happened to us in the mass, it didn't just happen to our family, it happened to everybody in this country.

You know at that time we started hearing about that because I had been involved with different groups at the National level and so I knew how vast this problem was, it wasn't just our story. But once I got over the pain, I couldn't talk about residential school without crying and once I got to get, once I had gotten over that pain I was able to start seeing what we need to do and that's why I said that I need to start with the healthy part of my life because that's what I focused on and I believe that we need to go back to our traditional values, and beliefs, and culture, and language, all that we lost. I say we need to, we need all that back so we can continue to heal because we lost it and there was a time when I came back that I was all smart mouthed. You know my mom she'd say things and I said yeah we're related to everybody because she would say this person, and you know they go back seven generations or more and you know. Well you know our connections with your grandma and my grandfather. They're all related from [xxxx] and I says oh yeah right because I'm learning at residential school that you only have a mom and dad and grandma and grandpa, you know you don't consider all their cousins and so forth family and, but as I get older and smarter, as my grandma would say when you get smart (laughs) that you learn it's really important the relationships that you have. I think it's very important.

So in the 19xx's I went to, I think when this woman was Health Minister, when the Liberal government was in power, she had a workshop, had the health workers from a lot of First Nations across Canada, we all went, I think there was about eleven of us or so from the Yukon, we went to Ontario. She had a big health seminar or health gathering there to talk about basically community development and what they now refer to as nation building and I started thinking about starting to look at a bigger picture and how we're supposed to get over this whole era of residential school and later the Scoop of the 60's and I've seen the Scoop of the 60's too and being raised in the old village in [xxxx], they call it the [xxxx] Indian Band, we had a house down there and I was actually talking with my sister about it last night and she said when she tells the younger people what life was like living there they can't believe it. They can't believe that we could be treated so badly. They can't believe that the sewage, the raw sewage came from the camp above the old village, where all the government subsidized houses were up on top that all that raw sewage flowed down and flowed right by, they had a little berm [crevasse], a little ditch like and it flowed right down I guess into the, I don't know if it went to the Yukon river or where, but people they were in so much poverty they started bringing all the First Nations people together in one area.

If you do the history, the historical background of where the First Nations people lived in [xxxx] they lived all over, they were moved from one site to another. If they were an "eye sore" for an entrepreneur or whatever, they were moved. They were once living up in well of course [xxxx] and all of those areas and on [xxxx] street, they were living there where the airport is so they all

got moved down to the industrial area there and I don't know if you remember, I don't know if you've ever gone down there but I remember when we were there people didn't have any place to hunt they went this way there was the hill, and [xxxx] and going this way was the garbage dump to the north and if you went to the east there was the river there and of course the city so they were all blocked in there was no place for them to hunt and survive and people in those days didn't have vehicles.

I remember the devastation at that time. I think I only knew one person who never drank, one adult and that was who became my auntie after my uncle's wife [passed]. Everybody else drank and there was a part of the village where we lived it wasn't as devastating, we found out years later as the people that who lived down. It was almost like three sections in that village and one of our friends told us that after five don't go down there because there was like gang rapes and all that, repeatedly and so you weren't really safe and then of course there was a lot of miners coming in and they were always looking for young girls and I remember we always, we made a pact, we would always try to go as a group if there was any movies that we had to walk to go to, we'd help one another to find the money to go because ten cents to get in and maybe fifteen cents for popcorn or whatever vice versa so we had to raise the money and then I'd tell them, I think I was kind of like their little, I was a (laughs) I'd tell them I'd says well if that vehicle slows down and tries, because we'd hear about all these, we call them DP's or displaced persons, but they weren't from here they were like European and they'd come here for the mines and all that, and when they would come into town they figured they just can [do what they want]. So they'd stop and say do you guys want to go for a ride or whatever and we would just grab our sticks and went running after them and they just took right off, but that's how we fended, that's how we had to fend for ourselves. They didn't dare come near us, they didn't bother us after. But I remember one of our, I don't know if I had met her at residential school, I don't know if it was at mission school or at residential school, and this one girl, and she I don't know if she had a disability or whatever but she ended up being murdered. They took her, these men or whatever took her up to the dump and after they had their way with her they beat her to a pulp and left her there, yeah. I just felt, to this day I just felt so bad for them.

I think all of that teaches you to be somewhat of an activist you know and you want to advocate for your people, women, and children I think. Children are very important for me right now you know. It sort of sets the goals for me in terms of looking after the children of my own siblings and my cousins and nieces and nephews or whatever. My place was always the safe house and then we're always raising children and I think it all stemmed from that, it's such a - I've seen so much child abuse and so much neglect, yeah.

I remember one girl telling me, she was a scoop of the 60's and I was just learning about child sexual abuse and physical abuse and she said you know one of the saddest parts is I know they took me away because my parents were alcoholics and they thought their house was not fit for me, she says when I got older, because she said she was really rebellious and ended up in different reformatory, they used to have reform schools and she said she was put into some of those as she become really rebellious and she said once they let her go she said her parents were both dead and she says one thing that however dysfunctional my family was she says I would have loved to meet and be with my parents. She never did have that chance. So I think about it, and then I think about this other, what they used to. Not only the discriminatory laws and what

they did to our people, yeah. When that really bothers me because children are so important to me and you love and cherish them but one of my cousin's wife, when they were quite young, about sixteen, you know she got pregnant, but because her mother was a single parent and this was back in the 19xx's and so the social worker thought she would be a hindrance to society and so had her, after she had her first child and she went over to the hospital, she had the authority to sign something to have her [sterilized], so she couldn't have any more children. Unfortunately that child, her baby died within a year she lost her baby so she went through a lifetime of not having children and wanting children.

Yeah so those stories really resonate with me and I think they kind of make me who I am today, it shaped me and so I believe that I'm a real advocate for children, and women, yeah I think it's all important. I used to think when I wasn't so well, I used to you know blame and blame the government and blame everybody and everything for all of the devastation that they put us through and I know some people had blamed their parents and I don't know if I ever did that, I probably you know not aware, being aware that maybe I was a little bit ashamed of being with them and/or yeah I just I can't get my thinking, my head wrapped around that but I remember I used to go into somewhat of a depression at the end of August, and I didn't know why and when you feel with your traditional beliefs, you know a dual thinking and other things and your intuition, I thought there was something, I got up early one morning. I remember it was late August and we were, I was helping my parents and they were cutting their meat right in the back of our place at [xxxx] and I said gee I think something's gonna happen. I said I feel so sick to my stomach, I hope it's not a death, I think we're going to get some news or something, I don't know what's going on. She (mom) said me too, I said I want to cry and she says me too and then I just got this "aha" moment and I said oh my god, all those years. I go through this every fall and it's because the school bus was coming to pick us up. It was so embedded in me that I didn't understand how much of an effect it had on me where I'm a grown woman probably about forty or forty-five then, that it was still affecting me and my mom looked at me and she said you're right, she says me too and I said but you didn't go to residential school. She says but how do you think we felt, how did you think we felt when someone come and take all of your children away. We were only left at home with children under five and that I think to me hurt me so much, it hurt me the most I think is to know how much pain our parents were in when they left, my dad and all the men they were out on a hunting parties or as game guides or they were hunting for their families and all the women were home with their younger children and all of their older kids were gone and then my mom, I said well what did you do?

And she said we started making home brew out of potatoes and other things, she said we started making home brew just to numb, well she didn't say numb out, she says just to help us forget and of course that started this whole alcoholism and because alcohol was new to their system, so it was quick. I think it was a lot quicker for them to become addicted to alcohol. So the amount of devastation, it just, it just bothers me that sometimes people will say oh yeah residential school did this and they blame everything on residential school but they don't look at our whole history and it wasn't just the residential school, the scoop of the 60's. How many children were, because of the alcoholism, how many children, how many people who are adults now that are in leadership or wherever, how many people were affected by fetal alcohol? A lot, you look at community, communities in Canada like our community in [xxxx] where the majority of people were drunk. We'd come back during the summer and we'd see them there drunk just about every

day. We've had to fend, maybe in the older child then, we had to, we didn't know how to handle the axe or power saws or anything, we scurried, we had to go over that berm that carried all the sewage and stuff like that and then we would get the kids to jump on the, you know the sticks there, like sticks you can break them into stove size so we can cook and what we had at home was a lot of macaroni and lots of chicken noodle soups so that was their main meal. I'd cook that for them probably daily, yeah. Yeah there was no wood, yeah it was devastating.

Big mistake that they [government] created that First Nation that it was easier for the government to administer and it was suggested to them that they make one band and they created the [xxxx] Indian Band to collect all the First Nations people living that came in from outlying areas. So whether they were from other areas in the Yukon, that they created this band called [xxxx] Indian Band. Yeah it was pretty bad and I think there was a lot of alcoholism there but I think there were two or three people in that whole community that worked every day. My dad and two other guys they used to walk up that hill going up to their jobs with highways and public works and they'd go to work every day and then I don't know how he [dad] did it. How he managed you know because he would get up every morning and come back at first he found mom would leave us as soon as he left for work and she used to come back at lunchtime making sure that there was lunch because he'd walk down and then back up and then towards, after that she didn't bother coming home. Went down at nine in the morning or whenever dad left and then she was gone all day. They both didn't come back until closing. They used to go to the bar and for safety reasons, because people would come after the bar they'd come to our place or whatever and I would have all the kids in one little room and I would have all these knives and I remember just keeping them safe. Just they'd try to pound on the door and I wouldn't let anybody in and the kids they, they don't know. They just know the voice whether it's uncles or neighbors or wherever. They just hear, and they get excited because they're home and they miss them and they want to go out and I wouldn't let them out the door. I would hold my hand, I remember, probably, I don't know. I don't know, my siblings - we never talk about it hey. So and I think that's something I, we need to come together as a family I think. We need to talk about our experiences.

I've been going to those public forums and I never so much as talk about my experience, but more about the process about how many people, how many lawyers make big bucks. The people, I wanted them to separate, I wanted the government to do was separate the cost. I wanted to let them know when you say that you had to pay the common experience monies or litigation monies, or whatever else. I say when you say you had to pay that for people who went to residential school, I said I want you to separate out I want you to tell us what the administration [got], because they set up huge departments and it wasn't us that benefited you know? We got three thousand dollars for the first year, ten thousand for the second year and three thousand for additional years. That's compensation? And yet they'll report billions of dollars spent - it all went to the lawyers and it went to the administrators, so I just wanted them to break it out and tell the world the way it was, the way it is. Who benefits.

So I would imagine there are a lot of misconceptions out there by the people who are non-First Nations who think that oh yeah our people got all this money and in actuality it went to like you said administrators and lawyers.

Yeah exactly, I wondered about that, I've seen some of my classmates who, like they're probably millionaires in the Yukon because they went and, they're in with the government and they make good money and all that kind of stuff. They're businesses. I often wondered when they seen me with, when my truck was brand new and that, I said I wonder if they think I got my money from the litigation or whatever? I've wondered about that. I've heard our own people say that "That guys an alcoholic. What's he going to do with his money? He'll die; he's just drink himself to death." And I thought my god; it's just like re-victimizing them you know. It's their money, if they want it for what they want to do. My brothers was kind of like a trailblazer and what he did with his money is he shared a lot of it and then he helped my, one of my other siblings was going to buy a vehicle and then he says I'll give you the money for it and then that way the money instead of, it came from him, the money that you would pay, normally pay them [bank] every month - you just give it to me every month and that ways he says when all my money is gone I have money coming in still. So he thought about that because other people they take advantage of them.

I just um, after I left residential school I went to another school and I think that's where I learned how to be a little rebel (laughs) yeah so I think we could get away with it and I shouldn't have been so bad but our administrator was more lenient than the principals that we had at the other schools. I don't think we got a strap, unless you had to do something really bad to get a strap or something but most of it is that you know you get to go downtown on Saturdays or you get to go to a movie on Friday nights or whatever and if you were bad you get to sit in the library instead of going downtown or whatever, so it was just a little, getting a little bit (laughs). And then if somebody said they were hungry, I didn't know why I thought it was in my place to go and do something about it (laughs). Yeah they started a program because there was one hundred students and we had to have lunches, everybody went to school, it was like a day, it was like you had to go out to elementary or high school so we had to make lunches and they hired three girls, three of us girls first right off the bat to, they paid us I don't know it was fifteen dollars a week, or whatever I can't remember it wasn't that much but it was better than what we had. So we would, I was making these lunches and the windows that they had in the kitchen was a sliding window so I was throwing those lunches out because there was a little culvert thing outside the window and so we'd go later to pick up all those lunches and what we were doing was we were trading the lunches with the guys to, you know for smokes or something. It was always for trade. Anyway we got caught and the supervisors were nice. I remember supervisor coming in and she said "Somebody lose these?" and I said I did, I put them out there and she says "why?" and I says because the boys are really hungry at nights, they get really hungry. So I blamed them (laughs) and I didn't tell them why. So then they started a program with feeding the older kids at night, yeah they would have sandwiches or fruit or something out for them and it was a place for them to come and gather again in the kitchen so it was, it was a good outcome (laughs).

Yes and then of course the competition, I've always, I didn't mind, I liked that other residential school, they were, it was a much better place to live you know it was clean, you had dorms. They had merits and demerits so if you did something wrong you got a demerit and if you did something good you got a merit and then they had a competition and then at the end of the week they would give away something or acknowledge which band, they called them bands, which dorm would win and I remember we were in two and we always got, our cousin used to say you guys were so naughty, how did you guys get to be the best (laughs). You guys were so bad, and

again before then we would take, we'd break into the kitchen and because people were hungry, we got into the kitchen and then we found some cracker jacks and yeah they called us the "Cracker Jack Gang" and we took some tea and made a fire down by the river but yeah and hid all that stuff. The guys would find our cache and they would steal everything and we'd steal dried bread and again we told the supervisor well people are hungry (laughs). Yeah they're getting hungry so they started making changes. The food was a lot better, we had rabbits and there was lots of fish, the food, there was lots of food and the clothing - the clothing was good.

They had nice pleated skirts and cardigans, they were matching and we had a sweater and cardigan and things got really much better with the supervisors and then we had a lady whose parents were working at the same residential school I went to. She was the supervisor and she would always leave stuff under my pillow. She was always, there would be bananas or something, but they it was more like military school there too. They would come and they would check, you would have to make up your beds really early before you go for breakfast and they would come with a coin and they'd drop it to see how high it bounces and all that and you had to clean, so it was bit like a military school.

I really think that residential school was more like boot camp, it was really bad but by the time I got to the other residential school it wasn't as bad and you kind of looked forward to it and you bonded, you bonded with your friends. You don't get to see much of your siblings because they're at a different age group so from the time you're in grade one until you're in high school or whatever, you're in the same grades so you, yeah. I was just trying to think if there were any other siblings who went. My one younger sister, she came later to the other residential school and so did my other sister but other than that and one of our older sisters of course but other than that I didn't see any of the younger siblings. All those years, just during the summer holidays and then I started moving away more from the family because of work.

I think I started work when I was twelve, yeah I worked at, for a lady in [xxxx] dishwashing and then I helped with making pies again in the kitchen and then a couple of my closes friends, and myself would work for eighty bucks a month from eight until eight every day. Can you believe that? Holy, I couldn't, that's child slavery. We were able to make money so some people went to work at the local café. I worked for government but it was trying to get, because you worked until ten or whatever and it was trying to get back over, you could walk, it's was quite a distance from where the hotel is right now to where the residential school was and you know it's not safe, but during the winter months it was too cold, so I didn't last there very long. Yeah, so we made extra money then I think in, the Indian agent that was working with education, he was new and so they had this idea, because around 19xx, 'xx, 'xx they were starting to talk about the White Paper and this is my theory: that they wanted to speed up the process of assimilation or whatever, they tried to move you, that they took a number of students from the Northwest Territories and the Yukon and send them to major cities like Vancouver and Victoria, and I got, there was a number of us that got, some went to high school, like myself and I think and a few others that actually went to high school and the majority of them went to adult studies so it was like a vocational school type. So some of them went to a vocational but I took grade eleven and twelve in Victoria that was another cultural shock. Yeah because it's like a lot of people, like three hundred thousand people or something like that and you don't know anyone, as we were all over the city we didn't, we weren't all placed in one area or one school. It was a big learning curve.

So I think all of that made me who I was. So when I came back to work for our people I started with administering the social assistance program in 19xx and then I thought there's got to be something more than just issuing welfare cheques or financial assistance so I started attending these conferences about community development and that's when I started looking at my own wellness because we really got into drinking you know, weekends (we) would work and then we'd drink and so forth, and a lot drinking even at the fish camp at [xxxx]. I don't know when it really started? Maybe after my youngest was born in 19xx that I started making some changes. So I think I started realizing that alcohol is a big problem in our community and there was at that time in 19xx and 19xx there were a lot of suicides.

In 19xx the suicide of one of my cousins, it really threw me for a loop and then as a result we had, we brought in a psychologist here in the Yukon and we brought him in to teach us, to give us some tools of how we could help ourselves. What we need to do in the community. We knew we were thinking that no one individual could come in and heal you, we'd have to; the healing has to come from within so we were to the thinking that we start working on our own healing and we start helping others - so a lot of workshops and a lot of courses that we took. We took a paraprofessional social work course, and alcohol and the North American Indian. I will always remember that there was a lot of studies around a doctor who used to have lots of statistics around alcohol and what he called the North American Indian so I really thought all of that was fascinating.

Yeah so that's kind of how it just keeps educating me about what wellness should be about, not only for myself but for the community and for my family. There was when we had I think around 19xx we've had at least ten people contemplating suicide. We've had so many narrow misses; they weren't just talking about it [suicide] they were actually carrying it out. I had one person who just creased themselves, and yeah there was just so many so we raised it at a, there used to be a Yukon Regional on what we call an advisory board and it was to alcohol and drug services for Native people and so we raised it and nationally there was a conference, not a conference, eight days intensive workshop that was put on by a healing institute. There was a number of people so there was this healing institute and the alcohol and drug for Natives and I think our First Nation assembly maybe or something maybe the brotherhood, or not Yukon but the national one something that I can't remember but they put this eight day intensive course on for alcohol or for suicide prevention and most of it when we got over the talking about what the problem is we started talking about what we can do in the communities to alleviate the problem, or address the problem or whatever. A lot of it was around nation building and community development so we started it, we started it in the 19xx's, mid 19xx's and I don't know where it's at today because I'm not involved but I don't know if you had any of the readings on nation building - they talked about nation building. This study, and I guess it was more around economic development but you could apply that to just about any subject and he was a guest speaker at a conference I went to in Ontario and the chief (at the time) for Kanesatake in Quebec, he was also there and he was working with him on nation building but from a Canadian perspective because he was the American perspective. It was around about how we can help ourselves basically.

Lots of education, I really took an interest in learning about how to make our people well, and how to and of course making and applying it to myself and everything so where my healing journey is now, is just focusing on our traditional values and beliefs and trying to bring those back because I think that that's the key, knowing who you are, your identity, and so forth so I think that's what we do. Both my husband and I are, we're going to the schools we have our own camps we are teaching about language and culture and so forth. So I don't think that language is going to come back in our community if it's done the way it continues if it continues the way it's being carried out now which is like being in a classroom and your only teaching so many people and really the people aren't that interested, they're not going to learn so it has to be done as part of your living so that's where we're at right now is that.

This year my husband is putting on a workshop, not a workshop - he's doing a first hunt with our grandsons, we've got grandsons so he's doing a camp, a hunting camp, so they're going to get their first moose and when they do we're hoping that they get it right away because we'll have all the meat and everything and when my sister's potlatch we're going to acknowledge them because usually we have our own potlatches and it will just that's what we want to bring back is that it will just honour those boys and we have a bunch of giveaways and everything and a giveaway on all the meat and stuff because my sister's potlatch is really close in September that we thought we'd have all that meat and everything that we'd give it away or these boys would be giving it out, yeah and then my husband's got quite a lot of rifles and initially we wanted to buy each of them a new one but he's got lots that he'll give his rifles to them. Yeah and give it to their parents to keep for the boys and my son's got two - the twins and then my youngest daughter's two boys and my other daughter's older boy and he's got his first moose already but we'll recognize him too and make him part of this. Yeah and my older sister's grandson is gonna come to the camp so he can get his first moose as well. They're not all going to shoot a moose you know, they're probably all going to be shooting at the same moose and that will be like they're first moose so just trying to bring the culture back like that and I think this year, and this has been kind of been ongoing this time of year I've always showed family how to harvest fish and meat and so forth so I'm going to do it for the community I think the week of the twenty second but later we'll have a family one and we always, my husband has extended family in Alaska and we have for the last, I don't know how many years, we've helped them process their, like they shoot the moose and he goes and makes sure they go and hunt, he doesn't shoot it for them. They shoot the moose, but they are a part of our nation so they can come and cross the line, and cross the border and shoot and hunt and so he's shown them how to dress the moose properly and make use of everything that's in the moose. Like they have to take care of the skin and they got to, yeah so.

So we're looking forward to that, so that's kind of the healing that I've done is just going back so that's why I said it's necessary for me to tell you about how healthy the first five or six years of my life was and what devastation we went through and how we would go back to you know a big part of our healing is to employ our traditional values and beliefs and I think no matter how young we were, we remember those and I think I get a recall too for language I remember because we spoke it fluently before we went to school and I'm starting to get some phrases back and my husband he understands you know fluently and he's talking, he's talking more so he's getting both the Tlingit and the southern Tutchone so he's, yeah it's all part of healing too. He only went to residential school for one year you know that he remembers, because they don't

look at the school [he went to] as part of the residential school and I don't know why because a lot of the First Nation's went to that school. I think several of his siblings and his cousins, like from his side of the family, they went to that school. Yeah so I'm hoping it fits the criteria of what you're trying to get?

Yes it does, for me to do this is more about hearing about people's healing journey and hearing their story and from what you've told me, and just to clarify with you-it sounds like your healing journey has been throughout your life and it has been in regards to you and including changes in your community. Community is very important, like you don't just do this on your own, you do this with the support of other people and through the process of wanting to help our people you helped yourself as well. Yeah exactly.

Yeah so that speaks to that interconnectedness and the importance of having more than just your nuclear family - like just your brothers and sisters and mom and dad, but to include your community and your family and friends as part of the whole process and it sounds like therapy for you now and still is continuing to do that. You know by taking your grandkids out and teaching them traditional ways and hunting and spending time with them. It makes me think about too when you're talking about your own upbringing when you were small with your grandma, that reflects now what you're doing with your grandkids. Yeah exactly.

You're there with them, you're teaching them, you're taking the time to show them the traditional ways - all of these things indicate to me someone whose has come full circle and that what you learned in those first six years really stuck with you in a solid way and even though you went through this hard period in your life that was quite traumatic you held on to that and that's a huge strength I see in you as a person whose gone through this whole process. Yeah and you're definitely a person who is a role model for a lot of people I think in terms of what you've done for your community and continue to do. Thank you for sharing, I appreciate it.

Thank you.

Story 3: Ed's Story

Good morning my name is Ed Anderson. I was born in British Columbia. My dad passed away in a plane accident up at [xxxx] when I was about fourteen years old and my mom raised six of us and we were living here in [xxxx] for, most or all of our lives I guess. I still go back and work in British Columbia every now and again but primarily my home is here. My grandfather on my mom's side passed away in [xxxx] quite a long time ago from tuberculosis and my grandmother got remarried again to a Finlander actually, my step-grandfather actually and yeah that's where she gets her last name from and she was of the Wolf clan, my mom's Wolf, so that makes all of us Wolf being maternal. Yen yédfi is our actual name of our clan so that's who I am.

I spent two years in residential school and I was like nine or ten years old when I went there, my brother he came with me and he was like six or seven so both of us were attendants down there at the school. Other than that we were brought up in what would you call a pretty normal lifestyle for First Nations people back in the 19xx's and 19xx's, there was lots of discrimination, there was hardly any work and there was a lot of drinking and alcohol in our family and of course violence and all the other stuff that came along with it, poverty and things like that. So being brought up in that kind of lifestyle coupled with my time at residential school I ended up drinking for about twenty-five years of my life. I started finding, like I performed, I worked, I played music in bands and worked, I became a carpenter by trade. I did lots of stuff, but there was always that residue there. That emotional chaos I find, so I was sexually abused in our school by this man that was our supervisor. He was actually charged with abuse by about a dozen First Nations people, all male, from the Yukon and BC and they took him to court. It was about a two-year process I guess.

So there was some things that, there was a response from First Nations people is what I was trying to get at I guess, and looking back I went to work in [xxxx] actually, I became part of the leadership and one of the biggest issues at that time was settling this residential school issue, they recognized it as something that was not right. They couldn't put no words to it, all they knew is they wanted to heal from it. Healing became a buzz word after a while but it was one of those concepts out there that didn't have any words attached to it because there were no explanations. So I started looking into this and I guess once you put your focus on something trying to find an answer to one of these situations, even though it's sort of cloudy and unsure and everything like that, you start finding things and I found books that dealt with trauma and I read that book and all the stuff that happened to us was mentioned in these books. The sexual abuse, the physical abuse, the verbal, the mental, the spiritual - all those things were mentioned in these books. Of course a lot of it was geared towards war veterans at this time because res school was not quite on the radar yet. So I started looking into this and started finding all kinds of material actually. So I kind of went on my own little quest of sorts and started looking into this more and more, and I started educating myself about this because first of all I didn't seem to find anything in contemporary universities or colleges or anything like that, so I decided to do my own. I found stuff that dealt with First Nations thought processing, how First Nations people saw themselves in the world prior to contact and after contact what happened and all of these kinds of things so the other stuff that I started working towards was finding out how families worked.

Various scholars, all those people they talked about family structure and how things should generally work. What causes upsets? - This business of addictions and how all that formulated and played out and everything like that. So I spent a lot of time kind of working through these and trying to bring this concept out of the fog and kind of assessing how serious it was and what was done to us and how serious all of that was and once I understood what the problem was, I started looking for answers and by this time I was getting pretty triggered I guess. I was starting to kind of fall into; I don't know how you would say it. I guess I was getting like angry and I found myself starting to go back and I was getting really angry with the way we were treated, and I started hearing stories from people around me in our community because a lot of us in my age group went to two different residential schools, some of the injustices that were carried on and the stuff that they put up with and how it's still a lot of the people started saying this business of res school is still here in the community. So I started trying to figure out what was it that was actually left behind? What are we still carrying yet?

And when I read this one scholar's theory on family he talked about rules, rules that govern our life and it came to me that I remembered that my uncle and I went down to the residential school actually and my uncle was there and he had to go do some work with the First Nation down there. He was working for a First Nation organization up here in [xxxx] but I had two or three hours to, three or four hours actually where I had to find something to do in town and it happened that the school was right there, it was open and there wasn't anybody in it and I asked the caretaker if I could have a look around, being a former student, just because to see what I could remember and I just wanted to do this. So I spent all afternoon looking around at the wreck room, the dining room, the playrooms, the dormitory, all these places that we had all attended while we were there and before I knew it the time was up and I had to go meet my uncle so we could go back to [xxxx]. Anyways he asked me what I did for the whole time and I told him what I did and the first question out of his mouth was "Did you go to the girls side?" and I said no and he laughed, and he laughed and he said "you're still following that rule" and I says holy smokes and then I thought about it a little more and I thought I wonder how many other rules I follow yet?

So this is where the whole business of rules started becoming important it's something that I should look into. As I was reading this book on families he lists a number of rules, that we as human beings that we generally use to guide our lives things that we grew up with, things that we thought were important and everything like that, and out of that list I picked four rules that I think still exist in First Nations communities. No talk rule is the first one, obey without question is the second, third is perfectionism, and the fourth is learned helplessness. There's two parts to the learned helplessness - the first one is the result of long-term institutionalization where you cannot budget your time, your effort, or your money. The second part is no matter what I say, do, or try I cannot change anything and I think if you kind of look at the problems that stem from First Nations communities and people that are addicted, these rules govern that type of behavior and that thought process quite a bit so once I started understanding that, I started talking to people about it and they kind of looked at me and they're not really sure.

The other thing I learned was about was abstraction. Children start understanding abstraction at about the age of nine, they can start making plans, and they can start seeing what they want and how they're going to get it and things like that even though it's not right there in front of them.

They can start understanding those kinds of concepts but if they're damaged prior to that, traumatized before that then they lose that ability to see those that type of thought processes or even understanding it and a lot of the kids, as you know went to these schools at the age of six and sometimes people or kids went as early as the age of four and sometimes they never ever came home. There were people from our community that were flown from [xxxx] all the way down around [xxxx] and halfway down the province and they never came home until they were eighteen. So they stayed there (residential school) for the whole time. So you can see the depth of this problem and it becomes a real challenge in order to start trying to make things right again.

So I'll go back to when I was in leadership, like I said I was starting to become pretty angry about what had been done to us as a people, and it started showing up in my work and I was taking it out on co-workers and people around me and stuff like that and so I figured out there was something wrong with me, not with the world. The world is what it is but I was not having an easy time of it and so I went over and talked to a lady. There was a lady that worked in our department and she dealt with sending people out to healing programs, programs of sorts and I found one that was in [xxxx] and it's still there yet, they deal with addictions primarily now. At the time they had a program going on that was set up to address issues that were coming from people that attended res school. Res school survivors so I thought this is what I'm looking for, so I signed up for it and I sent all the paperwork out and about two weeks later I guess they phoned me up and said "hey you got some time? We have a five week program and we want you to attend like right now" so I got on the plane and went down and I attended this program and we went through the whole process, it was a five week process like you stay and spent a couple weeks getting orientated and did some memory work and it was interesting about memory.

We were all there and we had all spent ten days together, there were eighteen of us in the group. We spent most of part of the day and when we started doing the memory work we couldn't remember each other's names because we were in a different segment of our memory, it was in the past so we could not remember stuff that was going on right now. That was really different hey? Just understanding these goofy little things it was like we were looking at each other and "hey, uh" and we couldn't remember their names. Yeah whatever your name is too, you know we were just being goofy and stuff like that, but the lady explained to us we're in a different segment of your brain and it's not about today. Like you're back thirty years or whatever and so that's why you can't remember what's going on right now. Anyway we started doing all this work and the third week is when the lady came in and did what they called "psychodrama" and people that work in this field all understand what that is, but we were all downstairs in a room, like I said there was eighteen of us and she talked to us about what she was going to do and she says I'm not going to assign, I'll just leave it up to you who wants to start. So it was an uncomfortable ten minutes before somebody put their hand up and wanted to start. Understanding; that it's pretty frightening work to look backwards in your life and talk about the things that happened to you.

People are not willing to approach us very easily. It's like those high wire acts and the circus you see the people swinging around and they're on one side of the tent and there is a couple of swings that go in between so going up there and doing that, if somebody throws you the swing you grab it, you swing, you let go then you have to grab the next one and then you swing over to the other side that's the kind of journey you have to take when you do this healing process but

some people find that so frightening, that split second when you let go of one swing and grab the other one. They just can't do it and that's part of that helplessness thing that goes on and I talk to people about it. I said what First Nations people do, we put safety net just about right under here so if you do fall, you're not going to fall far and they stop and they think about it for a while and they still won't do it.

I worked down in [xxxx] for close to nine years and I got one person to go to the trauma program, one. That's the nature of this business. But I went and the story that I talked about was the abuse that I went through. They asked me to kind of set things in place in the room, about where my bed was, what was there, there was a row of sinks because there was close to one hundred boys I think in that dormitory and we had a big common bathroom down at the end of the hall but we had to pass the supervisors office to go to the bathroom in the middle of the night but the supervisor, always laid in wait for us kind of and called us into his room and that's when everything started happening and I was really shocked being at the age of nine I didn't understand what the hell was going on and I'm not really sure as to how many times because a lot of the stuff you just file away in a waste basket but it doesn't mean it's out of your life, it's just someplace that you can't remember it or you choose not to remember it. Even though I've gone through the process I still have no idea as to. So I don't know what else went on there and even after all this work that I've done I've found sometimes I need to search around for it and find it and set that to rest also.

Anyway the process was I told my story and by the time having actually gone through it for the first time with a focus on setting all this stuff to rest. I told a story from end to end, not the fragmented manner that I had often done it before. I felt safe here at this place, this was the focus, this was the reason that I was there so I just went through it and did it. At the end of the narrative the counsellor asked me, she said "how do you feel" and I said I was, by then I was sweating and just so agitated and she said "well do you want to cry, do you want to scream, do you want to holler, do you want to swear, what do you want to do?" she says, and I just exploded and it took me a few minutes to kind of get through the emotional part but it was violent, it was super agitated. I was so angry and so in a rage and expending that kind of energy is pretty tiring. Like I finally settled down and I was just kind of taking some deep breaths and she said I have one more question for you she said, I have another question she said, and I looked at her and I was a little confused and she said "what was the message to you?" and I didn't understand and she said well every time somebody does something to you there's a message, there's always a message in it, so I looked at her and I thought oh, I was just this man's little play thing. He used me for his gratification, not mine, and there was another layer of anger that was about the same size as the first one. It was huge and it was violent. I started just screaming and hollering and cursing and everything like that and crying and everything and I was just sweating. I started to feel like somebody had covered me in vaseline from head to toe. It was all that garbage coming out you know and everything like that and I was feeling really "grrr" just like. I wanted to go and take a really hot shower.

Anyway after I settled down from that she said well one more thing to do she says, just when you thought you were finished, right, just like hey (laughs) now what? But she says I want you to talk to this man and tell him what you think of him, what it has done to you. I want you to pick somebody out of the crowd and, so I picked a young fella, he's about thirty-five, big kid and

pretty tough looking; I picked him (laughs) because of that. So he came up and we had to sit almost knee to knee, two chairs like that, and his knees were about that far away from me and (laughs) he was lookin' at me and I said I want to say something, I said first of all whatever comes out of my mouth, what I am saying is not directed at you personally, it's at this man who did all this stuff to me. You heard what he did to me. Yeah he says. So it's directed at him that I'm angry at not you. Second thing I'm not gonna hit you I told him (laughs) and he kind of breathed really deep (laughs). Anyway I started talking and I told him I spent twenty-five years of my life drinking and doing all that stuff, crazy stuff. Just running and running from who I was, and what I was, and what I thought. I thought it was my fault and all these kinds of things and I said I hurt a lot of people. I've been through relationship after relationship, I couldn't hold anything together, I couldn't hold a job, I didn't want to take a trade or anything like that and I finally did but I think it was my grandparents and my parents talking to me all the time that kind of motivated me in that direction. But for a long time I would not do anything like that. I was busy running. Anyway, and it took a little while to kind of start talking about the shortcomings in my life and my own thought processing and at the end of it I sat there for a while and she asked me "Are you finished?" I said yeah I think I am and she said I want you to give it back to him and I couldn't understand what she was talking about and I said "what? what?" she said well what he gave to you is not yours, this is all symbolic but we want you to give it back to him so I looked around and there was only a box of Kleenex on the floor so I picked it up and the man was sitting there and I threw it, I threw it beside him and I said "here this is yours, never ever was mine" I struggled with it most of my life but here it belongs to you. So I gave it away and that was closure of sorts for me and letting that old lifestyle go and after that I went outside, we took a break.

People were talking to me and things like that, but there was a big curb outside and it was one of those round curbs that was sort of round at the top like in parking lots and I used to walk on it all the time because First Nations people always talk about balance all the time right and probably no wider than that two by four there and I would always fall off. I never ever could walk it from end to end and that day I went out there and I tried falling off and I couldn't (laughs) I kept my balance. That's the kind of work that was done and I had to go and take a shower too, it was just like it was so "ughh" and like I was always oily before I did that kind of work. My skin was always oily, now its way different hey, way different. But it was like I was saying I work for the band (music). The guy in our band knows close to five hundred, maybe more now, five hundred songs he can pull out of a hat just about any time and play and sometimes he has a hard time remembering all this stuff but we help each other. We help each other through some of this. Before I went and did this kind of work I had a hard time kind of keeping up, my memory was always sort of splotchy, somewhat fragmented and after I came back and started doing this work again I found things were a lot easier. It's my memory; if your memory is full of just negative, scary shit then you're not very likely to go there to kinda retrieve information, even if it's not about what you've gone through. But after I cleaned it out and took all that bad stuff out, I find I can go back to my memory with no problem at all. That's one of the easier things to do now, and it makes things a whole lot easier, lot more life giving, and you feel a lot more capable all that kind of stuff. Your self-esteem you starts rising and everything like that. I just took three weeks off of work here and I come back and everybody's kind of listening and seeing if I remember everything and everything is there! Everyone's just glad (laughs).

Yeah it was just incredible. Like I figured I regained about eighty percent of my memory for some of that stuff, it was incredible what happened so this period in our life has been really dark so if you add say fifty percent of the people that went through the res school system that are still around yet, go through this process imagine what it would do for our society if you had seventy-five percent of things just keep getting better and better and better all the time hey? So if we start doing this it's more widespread that people go through this. Everything would just, addictions level would kind of drop like almost, I don't even think about it most of the time now. I've been clean and sober for about twenty-five years now and I struggled with it before but now it's hardly even there. I think about it once or twice a year, it comes and goes in about five minutes (laughs) it's incredible how different things are because you don't need it, you don't need it to make yourself feel better. It's just the stuff that you're able to do and I find its way more, it's a lot healthier.

You know you often hear addicts say "oh he's sobered up and he's on the straight and narrow now and I tell, the workshop that I give, I tell them you know "that's so full of baloney, I said the straight and narrow is when you're drinking. I said think about it, I said you go in and you got a bit of money and stuff like that, you have a few friends around, you have a few beers. After about two or three you can't drive anymore. If you have half a dozen, maybe even better depending on your personality pretty soon you're out of the bar, you can't even stay there because you're just getting too rowdy and then you go home and pretty soon you're out of there because you're giving your wife a hard time, or your partner (laughs) and then you go and try and drive and run in the ditch and now you got no truck (laughs) their looking at me. I says when I go, I come out and drive home and do whatever I want to and I'm not restricted in any way really. Which to you is the straight and narrow I said (laughs) and when they answer it kind of grinds out of their teeth and they're just like "when you're drinking?" (Laughing) So I give them a bit of a hard time about things like that, but they enjoy the talk that I give to them. I talk about the rules that I talked about a little earlier on. The other thing that I tell them is that when you take one set of rules out you replace it with another or else, the original, even though they're not as easy to get along with, they'll come back at ya. Those rules will come back. So I recommend this book that talks about our seven habits as a way to kind of replace things and I talk to them about that too. I go through all of the seven habits and I explain it to them and once they understand it, it's a lot easier for them to kind of, understand and are more willing to take it up.

So those seven habits, are those the ones you went through for yourself?

Yep. Actually I found a book and by growing up fatherless I had very little in terms of rules for my own life. I tried all the time to find something that was timeless in a sense. If you look to religion, you look to, you try to find role models and everything was pretty temporary. So one day somebody came and ask me, they were looking at it I guess they were reading it and I looked at the first few pages and said holy smokes. So anyway I went and bought the book and once I started reading it I could not put it down. It was just something I wanted in my life and needed for my own because I didn't have any real structure, positive structures in my life so I ended up reading the book about eight times I guess. Every time I went through it I found other things and probably about the sixth time I was reading I thought now comes the hard part, I have to implement this stuff into my life now right? And I was sitting there thinking about it and thinking about it and I thought hey wait a minute! I'm already doing it. I'm already starting to

practice some of this stuff because once you put it in your brain it's there so once your brain sees an opportunity to use it, then you start using it and it's not a conscious thing neither. It's a way of problem solving basically. So I thought yeah this is cool (laughs) and it's not a real big, hard issue like I thought it was going to be. Yeah it was really, you start discovering things.

The other thing that I will go back to, when we were finished that psycho drama down at the treatment centre of course we still had two weeks to be in there so we did a lot of debriefing and talking about the things, what had happened to us basically and we talked a lot like this. So there were eighteen of us talking about this kind of stuff and the mood in the whole room just started elevating like you would not believe. We started calling it Aboriginal heart surgeries because it has to do with emotions right? We started to take all the chaos out of all the emotions, started becoming more focused, a lot more positive. There was two alcohol and drug groups that were going through simultaneously with us and so there was quite a few people in there probably about sixty people all totaled and we all shared a common dining room. So we asked these groups we said, what were we like when we first came in here? They said you guys were all really quiet and just like scared and never said much, never did much, never contacted very many people, never talked, kind of talked a little bit. What are we like now we asked? They said you guys are just like a bunch of school kids (laughs) dancing and singing. The cook played all of the music that we liked, like country music, and all that stuff and she had it up really loud and we were all bouncing around having a good time (laughing) and it was just amazing the transformation that happened. So it was nice to hear, like we weren't in the shadows anymore. We weren't invisible; we didn't want to be invisible anymore. You know back in the damaged, not sure what to do or where we fit in the world or anything like that and things started really changing and if people want to do something positive in their life it takes this program that I went to, they pared it down to three weeks for people that are workers and could not take the five weeks off and stuff like that.

But I really advocated for our workers in [xxxx], I said give these people this time because you'll have a more positive person coming back to your workforce and just do it. So I talked to leadership and advocated on behalf of people that were going out that were in our workforce and everything like that and so it started happening. People went out for alcohol and drug programs but they would not go to the trauma and I found that pretty ah, I said you're already halfway there - just go through the second half but it was the sad part. People were not interested. So I worked hard at trying to get people engaged in this process because they're setting down something that you have no need to carry around for the rest of your life or pass on to their kids.

That's the other part of things. It's intergenerational. What you are about is what you're going to teach your kids and if it's all bad stuff then that's what they're going to teach their kids and that's why we see all the stuff that we see now, with the suicides of young people. It's just; it's heartbreaking to see all of this. I was sitting in the dining room at the treatment centre and I was reading the paper and there was this story in this newspaper about this guy that drove logging trucks and he was one of those super macho type guys but he was being brought up, and being charged with child abuse and what he was doing was he cut the handle off a hockey stick about two and a half feet long I guess, and he used to beat his son with it all the time. He would be whacking the kid over the head and across the back and the kid was showing up at school with bruises all over the place and broken ribs and finally the teachers started doing some

investigating and found out this was going on and so they brought this fella up before the judge and the judge asked him “Do you know that this is wrong to be doing? Hitting your kid like that? Beating your kid like that? And the guy says, “What are you talking about? That’s what my dad did to me” he says, “I’m just teaching my kid the same way” He said I’m okay. So that’s how this intergenerational stuff carries on. That’s the most graphic story that I’ve heard, and this is a non-Native family you know, it was just the way they were brought up you know and doing all this and what they think is proper and whatever your parents do you think is, and like these kids are more or less held prisoner. They’re not children, they’re not a loving, caring family and so kids have no place to go. They’re caught up in these rules that are so negative and that’s why we have all the kids that are doing all the drugs and alcohol. They’re caught up in all of the really shallow stuff and we need to change that.

I talked to our group down at [xxxx], the people that work in our office. I said what is the most common question that we ask of our people and they all kind of looked at me and said we’re not sure and I said we ask them to change. What I’m going to propose is that we as an organization change also to accommodate and to make sure because a lot of stuff that they bring to us is unusual. It’s not normal behavior of sorts so we need to be able to respond to that and we need to change to make sure that we can advocate for them. So we brought families’ together, people that usually when kids are taken away by welfare it was a one-way door. Kids were gone and that was that. We went to court for them for two years for this one family, two years and we changed that precedent; we set precedent for all across Canada actually. Our little nation and we got the kids back, we reunited the kids with their family and so things can be changed. We did not take the stance that we were helpless or hopeless or anything like that. We stood up and fought for what was right. That’s another thing that the seven habits talked a lot about. Always fight for what’s right, not who’s right and that’s what the government tries to push on us. They said according to us, and our rules this is the way things work. We take your kids away and that’s it. Breaking up families is never right. So we fought for what’s right and we won. (Laughs) It can be done and what I’m telling people now it should be done.

So these are the kinds of things that are available to us. We just have to kind of see it, and again its abstraction, you go back to the stuff that we talked about earlier. Damaged before you can understand abstraction, you’ll never have it until you take all of this emotional garbage out. Who am I not? (Laughs) I’m not scared, I’m not invisible, and I always tried to be. The only way I could express myself was through my guitar, I became pretty good at it but now I’m also learning how to talk and understand things and see things for how they really are and not listen to the hogwash that’s being put out to us all the time. I don’t know if I’m intelligent or not but I work at it. I’m trying to figure things out, work it through, and explain it to other people in a way that’s understandable to me. Not in a pretentious kind of way but a realistic kind of way and be there. Try and be an advocate for people that are kind of lost and don’t know what to do.

I gave a talk about rules way back, I don’t know ten or fifteen years ago at the local treatment centre located just outside Whitehorse and I wrote those four rules down on paper, on a flip chart and I wrote the seven habits just on the next, like on the same sheet and I just pretended I was busy and of course all the people were sitting there and they started reading all this stuff and finally after about five minutes I turned around and introduced myself and I said have you read what is on the chart and they said yeah and these were people that were serious addicts. They had

been, they were about ready to go to jail, a lot of them had lost their kids and a lot of them were losing their homes because they hadn't paid rent and damaging their homes beyond repair and stuff like that. These were just about street people, but I thought I would ask it anyway. I said have you read those rules I said? And I said if you had a choice which ones would you use to direct your life and all of them, they picked the seven habits. These were people that were you know like grade eight education, they were all my age and they had been drinking for most of their life. So I was kinda of surprised actually and I asked them. Why did you pick those ones then? They said they seemed to be more life giving they said. Those other ones I said you recognize this one though? And they said yeah, we lived by those rules for most of our lives. I said did you know there was a choice? Not until now they said. I said so that's what the whole, so I kinda went through the whole presentation with them, talking about where the four rules came from and I explained the seven habits because it talks about synergy. Do you know what synergy is? There's a lot of people that don't. Seek to understand before being understood; I said I ask people to when I do representations down at the alcohol and drug agency they're looking at it. I kind of have an idea they say you know (laughs) so I explain it to them and stuff like that. I say it's the basis of respect I said.

Those old timers were great on this stuff, they always hear you out first and then they start giving their response or these things and they don't tell you this is what you have to do, they just say this is the way I see it and they were just kind of, (laughs) they were blown away hey? That's the other thing about that seven habits I was probably through it about the fourth time and I said I've seen all this stuff before and it stumped me for probably a couple weeks actually. Now where did I see it? And I always had a warm feeling when I thought about it like that in my heart and then I thought I know where it is – it's those Elders, those old time Elders. The ones that English is their second language, they were brought up in the bush. They came out and talked to us when I talked to them and I remember them talking about things like this and I said I wanted to do this because that's where I wanted to be. I wanted to have it done and this is the process that I'm going to take, there's one of those rules that says begin with the end in mind. So you look at your goal and how you're going to get there. A lot of those Elders talked like that and I remember them and just grinning away, just thinking about that (laughs). It was so nice to spend some time with those old timers like that because they were really clear, they were humble, and they talked in a way that you really understood and all of a sudden you find yourself standing right next to them just like that (laughs).

So I started thinking about the wisdom of these old timers and how they got along considering, like a bureaucrats came up into our part of the world and they said we're going to teach you how the big boys do things. You know that was their attitude all the time, they came with this fictional cartoon character attitude (laughs). And I told a few of them that too and they were just looking at me (laughs). Yeah and their going to teach us they said well look at your land you don't even use it I said what makes you think that? I said first of all, our land is the way it is because of our land management practices. We don't go out destroying stuff; we keep it as much the way it is. We still use it, we take trees, animals, we fish we do all that kind of stuff. Now we run a hydro plant and it doesn't even hardly affect. We provide all the power for [xxxx], we're in the process now of providing power for [xxxx] and [xxxx], yeah we're going to start selling it to and the other thing about that is we're the only First Nations in Canada to date, that owns wholly owns a power station like that. The Cree's are in partnership with hydro companies down in,

around the Hudson Bay and places like that but we own this one. It's small but it's all ours and it can grow. So it's just (laughs) who signs that, I always try and mention that all the time, yeah but thinking about those old timers and stuff like that.

It was really interesting to listen to them talk. This one bureaucrat came to our community this one time and we used to do house visits every now and again because we had to get people interested, they wanted to get people interested in land claims and so this bureaucrat, a young guy, he kinda tall and big husky kid and he used to grab our hands and squeeze the living daylight out of us hey, just like that and he finally went over to one of our members and I remember he was pretty tough too hey so this member just started squeezing his hand and this guys was like oh gee! (Laughs) He responded hey. Anyways this young guy was telling my grandmother, yeah we're going to do this down in this part of the world down there and grandma says "No you aren't, that's wolf territory she said." "No that's Crown land" the young bureaucrat says and grandma says "it is, I want you to show me the paper that we signed saying that it was now yours" and that young fella looked at grandma and says "I don't think a paper like that exists" well then "it's not yours she said, it still belongs to us" she says (laughs). But you know these kinds of things, again it's not about whose right, it's about what's right. Right? So I kind of take the view that this land claims is just a big theft and they want us to pay for it, for stealing our land. You call it for what it is right? You don't mess around or be halfway about it.

Anyway so those are the kinds of things I started seeing after a while, after the stuff I've gone through and again it's about abstraction - being able to see it, and make comment on it and it starts becoming easier and I'm getting to that age now too, I'm becoming, well I am an Elder now I guess (laughs) but I want to be. That's what I work towards, my responsibilities. I don't want our people, our future generations sitting out on the edges of these communities begging for the simple things in life - food, medicine, education that kind of thing. I want our people to be upstanding, out there, using what they have, and the gifts that they have but we need our home. That's way I ask the young people - don't talk about our home as land. This is our home and don't you ever forget it. We won't, we won't they says (laughs) because words - they'll steal it in any way that they can, governments will steal in any way that they can and you gotta understand that so I said you gotta be careful about these kinds of things and don't you ever, back down from these boneheads. How else are we going to become upstanding members of our society, of the world actually. Just from our own little First Nation we've pushed back the federals to court, and now we're going to the Supreme Court talking about rights and title and stuff like that. We won down there - they say we didn't, but we did and we'll always maintain that attitude.

So I remember one of the chiefs from Canada's prominent First Nations organizations comes up, he was just newly elected I can't remember his name now. Anyway he came into our office up there and he was looking around, there was probably about twenty people in the meeting room downstairs and he said "I thought this was just a huge, brisling nation he says you guys are just small he says" (laughs). Yeah we got about four hundred people somebody said. "Holy, you gonna make so much noise?" he says (laughs) but size doesn't matter right - it's the fight and we talked about it when I was in leadership, all of us talked about it. We said in any of these battles that we get into we'll always take the high road. Again, talking about what's right, not who's right. We always took that attitude and we continue to do it yet. So that's the only way we're

gonna win battles right? So that's part of who I am, and what I've been involved in and things like that now.

So I'm glad that I managed to thank the Creator for helping me, for giving me the strength to walk the path that I have and showing people that it is possible that things can change and it's not things around us that change it's me that changed and having the willingness to go through the hard battles because some of the hardest stuff that I had to do, and I talked about it that one time, this bureaucrat came to me and asked because I was working in the addictions program down there they said "what is the hardest part of your job?" and I said just getting people to turn that mirror around and look at themselves because most of us pack a mirror around and say look at how bad you are. I said just turn it around and look at themselves, I said that is the hardest part to do. So he just kind of looked at me and he just kinda walked away (laughs). He never thought about things like that, they don't teach that kind of stuff in university right? (Laughs) We come from a place where we have to work with this stuff all the time you know and so, starting to put words to things. Like I said just finding the words for all this was a challenge in itself right? So that's for myself it was probably one of the hardest things.

The other thing that I should mention is when I was actually, did all the paperwork to go to the treatment centre I made the trip down there and I was just sitting there because we weren't doing a heck of a lot. It was prior to the actual work that we did there, probably the first or second week I thought I still don't need to be here, I don't know why I'm here I said and finally I thought to myself how many times have I done this now? Every time I do it I come up with another excuse why shouldn't be there and doing this kind of work for myself and so I did a little inventory privately and I kept track of it and I came up with twenty three reasons why I shouldn't be there, doing this kinda work (laughs). That's how strong the denial is about all this stuff and (laughs) finally I thought maybe I should just settle down, what do I really know about healing? Not a hell of a lot. What do these people know about healing? Probably quite a bit (laughs). Maybe I should just take their hand and let them lead me through (laughs) so that's what I did, I practiced a little bit of humility that's all it was right and I'm glad that I did it now. I thought to myself it was just such a big relief after all this stuff was gone and life became, again and like when we talked about it as being Aboriginal heart surgery I thought it was a miracle, the transformation that happened and once you see a miracle pretty soon you recognize it for what it is and all of a sudden you start seeing it all over the place. Little miracles here and there right and that's what makes life so interesting now (laughs). I just found it, I can't speak enough about it you know and I wanted to tell people this is a gift that you give to yourself. All you have to do is participate and follow what they tell you. It's the hardest work that you'll ever do, but it also carries the greatest rewards so just go and do it. They said they're there, we can help you and they still have a hard time dealing with that part of it. I said "are you worth it?" "I think so" a lot of them will answer like that. So they have very low opinion of what they are worthy of, and it's really hard to see and I talk to them, and talk to them about this stuff and I just think about how we could become a very vibrant group of people again and how much, how life giving, how much a gift it would be to our children but we're not there yet and that's one of the things that's another example.

This hydro station that I talked about a little earlier on, my cousin did it; he worked on it and put it together. I talked about this stuff twenty years ago when I was in leadership and I asked

people, our leadership to come. There was a guy that came and talked to us, he wanted to talk to us about construction. He knew people that could build it, he wanted to talk about the idea - nobody showed up, none of the leadership - nothing. This fellow was pretty dejected; he was a good friend of mine. I still see him around he's from Whitehorse here actually. Anyway my cousin came along and saw all the work that had been done, the ideas that had been kicked around and all these kinds of things and he just took it from there and he went and did it (laughs). Now we own it and it's going to take us awhile to pay all this stuff off but it's there for the future, it's not there for now right because we have to pay for it all and it's pretty expensive stuff and again it's abstraction, being able to see into the future. We're not going to benefit from it much except that we have bragging rights you know. But those are the kinds of things that are available at the end of this. What would take probably five weeks for a person to do and I really wish people would take that on and just do it (sighs) and I think the other part of it is, I wanted to see that organization come up into this part of the world and set up, and start teaching us. I think we have the intelligentsia here that could run a program like that on our own. People say it has to be done out on the land away from everybody - it doesn't have to be. They ran that program right down in the middle of the subdivision down in [xxxx] and you know there was nice places to go they took us out to the ocean and going around various places while we were down there but it doesn't have to be out in the bush, in fact it should be in a place that's close to medical facilities in case people have problems with memories and stuff like that because some of the stuff is pretty traumatic and it sets off all kinds of little explosions all over the place. Food of course you know all of these kinds of things, airports, and all that kind of stuff hey. Anyway I hear people talking about that yes the land is a part of our, but we can enjoy that stuff after we're done with the program. We can be out in the bush as much as we want right? We don't have to run this program like that; it's not one of the requirements. Anyway do you think I covered what you wanted to hear?

Yeah I think so, I do have some questions that I would like to ask you if that's okay? Yep.

I guess one of the top questions that's in my mind is listening to everything that you've said and the way you talked about how you have lived your life and how you work with people and how you support people. I'm just wondering and I'm pretty sure I know the answer to this, basically what you went through in residential school and then dealing with your own issues this is something you now use to work with other people that it's kind of like your guide in that okay this is what I went through and this is what I've learned as a result, and this is what I would like to use with the people I work with now. Is this safe to say?

Yep that it can be done, like I said the work is probably the hardest that they'll ever have to do but it also carries the greatest rewards. I never understood the concept of freedom until I went through this program and I tell them that's out the other end so if you're, if you get a little scared or whatever think about what's at the other end. Begin with the end in mind is what it is really. What can you gain out the other end and to them freedom is not something they understand so it's not a viable goal in their mind until they actually experience it. So it becomes a bit of a challenge to get. You almost have to hold somebody's hand and just walk them through and when I was down at that program it was set up for First Nations survivors of res school. It was run by First Nations people so they really understood all this stuff and it was a great place to be and to go to and it was a place where they celebrated an awful lot too, all the people that were in

the house when we got there, they all went into this one room and they lined up against the wall and we just went through and got a hug from everybody, said they were just glad to see us and there was like forty or fifty people there so you get forty or fifty hugs and all of this positive input you know, like holy (laughs) and if somebody celebrated a birthday and it was Mother's day or Father's day they had a big celebrations about that so it was really life affirming basically, it was a great place to go. I didn't want to leave, holy smokes, once I finished all the (laughs).

And that was a five-week program?

Yeah and it was great, so when there was everything was staggered, a group would start, two weeks later another group would start and we came in a week later something like that so people came and left all the time right. So we would do the same thing with them when they were leaving, give them a big hug and talked to them, nice to see you and getting to know you all that kind of stuff and they left and a new group would come in and same thing we'd do all this stuff again (laughs) but it wasn't stuff that we were used to in res school right? They brought you in and started beating the living daylights out of you, laying the law down and reading the riot act to us for us and all that kind of stuff so it was kind of a way to kind of set people at ease and we're willing to participate in things like that.

So it didn't feel like an institution in a lot of ways.

Uh hmm. It was more people-orientated right and we did various things we had check-ins all the time, talking about how we were and if there were anniversary dates. Anniversary dates are about deaths, or something happened to you, you know and sort of upsetting you even though you may not be consciously aware of that stuff it's still there yet and it kind of agitates you so we talked about things like that and pretty soon we could put actual events to these feelings that we were having and why they were there. So all of these kinds of things were taken care of, it was a great place to go like I said.

It sounds like it was very rewarding to you that you got a lot out of it by the sounds of it?

Yeah and a lot of the other people. The other part was like I said. When they asked me to pick a man out of the group, or somebody out of the group to play the supervisor, we got to do that quite a bit. So we played parts in other peoples' scenarios and stuff like that. I played an abusive husband to this one lady and she said this is what my husband said to me, and she laid out all this really negative, violent stuff and she asked me to repeat all that stuff so here I am, actually I could hardly keep it together I was crying and stuff like that and I didn't want to do this and she said, they all told me just do it they said (laughing) and I said what did he say again? And she told me so I had to repeat it, and do it like you're angry they said (laughs) oh it was tough, holy man.

The other one that was really, was gratifying was we were in a room downstairs, it was a long, oblong room and there was two doors on it and out on the other side of the wall was another room but there was windows all along there, big windows from the ceiling to the floor and the sun always came up in the east, it was early in the day, there was one lady that didn't want to do hers, she didn't want to do her story so we had to come in on a Saturday and do this and just the

night before it just snowed which was odd for [xxxx]. It was about like six inches of snow and so everything, it was a clear day and the sun was shining in those windows and just shining through those two doors and we did her scenario up here and what happened in her life was that she was out with her father, her and her brothers and sisters, I don't know, four or five of them I guess, and they were all out fishing and they were quite a ways out in the lake and the father fell overboard and he drowned and she watched him. She was trying to get over to help him and she couldn't get over her brothers and sisters without tipping the boat over, but drowned, he disappeared. He just went down and that was pretty rough on her, she blamed herself all the time for things like this and I had to play the father and the counselors asked me to come back and visit her again sort of in spirit and I had to tell her it was okay and she shouldn't be doing this to herself, that I really loved her and I thought about my kids and how I felt about them and that's where I talked from being a father too. I talked to her and I was holding her hand like that and we were close together again almost knee to knee and she was holding my hand and I talked to her for quite a while, telling her, being really positive and affirming and all that kind of stuff and told her not to do this anymore to herself and then the counsellor whispered in my ear "tell her that you have to go now", you have to go back to the spirit world basically. I said I want you to remember all this stuff that I told you, and that I really care for you, really I love you but I have to go now and she was holding on to my hand and she just about put her thumb right through my finger, my hand like that, she took it and she didn't want to let me go and she just held on to it for quite a while and finally she let go and she said goodbye. Like I said the doors were there and the sun was just bright coming through and I had to walk through that door (laughing) back to the light basically. It was amazing the stuff that went on there, all these little things that almost seemed like it was heaven sent in a sense you know. I never saw this girl again; I don't know she was from down the prairies some place. Yeah it was really quite the experience actually in all kinds of ways. Never saw life like this before so vibrant, and everything. I was just like a little kid (laughs) yeah it was really different and I really recommend it if people can do stuff like this.

I have more questions. You talked about a theory they used in treatment, I'm wondering if you can clarify that a little more. You were talking about it at the beginning when you went down to treatment and what their philosophy was and the way they were approaching things with you. I'm just curious as to how that related to you and how you interpreted that I guess, what worked for you?

We went there, we got orientated to the building and the processes, and all that stuff. They gave us rooms and told us we were; this is how things worked. It was all kind of day-to-day stuff right. Where the dining room was what time we ate, there was sweat houses there and we would go at this time, we'd do some grief work. Second week was memory work, so we talked a lot about what had happened to us and where we came from. We did a genealogy. They put up a flip chart and you had to kind of talk about your parents and siblings, your grandparents and of course like, and that helped kind of, helped you see where you came from, how many people were addicted, how many people died of addictions, you know how many people died from and how they died. Some people were in jail, some people were killed, suicides, all that kind of stuff. People you know just kind of walking through all that stuff and you kinda understood why you were the way you were and then the third week this lady came in and actually wanted you to be specific about a story - why were you there? What did you want that was plaguing you for most of your life? And of course sexual abuse was mine and then walked you through that whole

process, like telling your story and what the three questions that she asked and exposing that anger and allowing it, now to let it go. Basically I threw it out, and a lot of us did, they didn't want to carry that stuff anymore so they would holler and scream and they gave us a little foam block and everything like that but that's the meat and potatoes of this stuff. If you run into somebody that has a lot of unresolved trauma in their life and you agitate them one way or another you see them explode in anger. You're only starting to see part of it, what they actually contain within themselves is just about, you know it's just huge.

So when you were talking about the block - what was the block? That they gave you?

Oh it's just a little foam block and a foam bat so if you wanted to go like this.

Oh for hitting.

Yeah just being – like I wanted to break something up. I was just gonna find an old outhouse or just take a hammer and beat the living daylight out of it (laughs) and they give you that little foam block you thought it was kind of childish when you first get it but boy I tell you, just letting that energy go. It's about energy right, letting that negative stuff go and that's what I did, just hammered. One young guy came to me after and said geez I thought you were having a heart attack he says (laughs). He called himself arrows, you know. Anyway (laughs) but it's the first time that I'd ever been through any kind of, well I went to a program which was in [xxxx] also but it was run by a non-Native organization that just deals with sort of unresolved trauma in a different way so they did memory and breathing work but I didn't find it, I didn't participate and I watched it but I didn't participate. It just didn't sit well with me.

Can you clarify - what you mean by “not sit well with you?”

Um, I didn't know if it would do what I wanted it to. Even though you may not, it's the first time you see it and you kind of understand it but it just doesn't seem like it's going to work. You know you got a broken leg and they want to put a band-aid on your arm? (Laughs) It just doesn't seem right (laughs). Anyway I, it just didn't. We were out looking for programs that might help with our First Nation right so they sent us out to participate in a lot of these things but when I went to this treatment centre that was a better part of it and we got to listen, to witness a lot of other people's stories and things they'd been through and a lot of it was pretty similar to, we all went through similar things right so, and we helped each other through - that was the other part so it became pretty interesting actually. Like I said it was a great place to be and anything else?

Yeah I had some more questions. You said something earlier about being busy running and I want you to maybe just clarify “running”, I'm not sure if you mean that as a metaphor or how you mean by that when you said you were “running”?

Um, first of all I drank quite a bit. You know you surround yourself with the chaos. Because I really loved the chaos at that time, it was the bar, the business of being in a [music] band and stuff like that you know. It took me away from my memories and learning, I went to carpentry school. I was drunk most of the time I was down there but came out with like eighty-eight percent all the time and everything like that. So busy, busy, I just kept myself active all the time.

I never bought a car, I ran to work. I lived down on [xxxx] street and I ran up behind the hotel across from the airport every day. Be there, sittin' there waiting for these guys to show up for work (laughs) and I would catch a ride home but I would go to sleep for an hour or two and go play all night in a bar. I would sit up all night till 2 playin' and party til 4, goin' home, go to sleep get up at six and back to work again. That kind of stuff, just busy, busy and that's running right. That's how I kept away from these memories that were in my head.

Okay so it was a way to avoid those memories. You just kept moving so they wouldn't catch up with you?

Yep, but inevitably something would trigger it and that's when I started getting violent, and started becoming self-destructive of sorts and things like that because you never, ever had a sense of - it was always chained to your leg and after a while you just get tired, get tired of it and you just want to. It was almost like no place to turn because it was always there.

So what was the turning point for you? In terms of deciding, okay I want to make a change in my life and I want to change the way I'm living to - have a healthier life?

That's what I was saying there was one fella, when I worked in leadership down in [xxxx] there was one fella that came to us and he was always accusatory. He was always really negative and calling us down and stuff like that and after putting up with him for about a year almost on a daily basis I was one day just looking at the window and I was going to throw him out the window (laughs) and I had to really concentrate and make myself back up and turn around and walk away and that's when I thought it's not with him, it's with me. He's doing it because he's reminding me of something and I thought about it and of course all this res school stuff started coming to the fore and I thought that's what I have to deal with and that's when I went to, probably that afternoon I probably went to that lady and talked to her about programs that were available to us and she gave me, she said I don't know anything about these things and what they do or anything like that but here's all the information, she said there's probably half a dozen different organizations that do this kind of work so you tell me which one you want. So I went home and I read them all and picked that place and again like it's all of a sudden like, basically the way I look at it, people who went to the school had a broken heart so how do you heal a broken heart? Again a very abstract thing right so how do you do it? So I looked at it and this one seemed to resonate with me, yep. As soon as I saw it I said yes that's the one, and I filled it all out and took it back to her and she sent it out and like I said, two weeks later I got a call (laughs). Be here next Monday they said and it was a Thursday or Friday I think (laughs). Everything just fell into place and I kinda knew it was the right place right? So it was a lot of positives. So it was - you go with your heart right.

So it was more of a connection for you to your heart?

Uh hmm. Yeah mental and, that's the greatest synergy of all right - heart and mind working together right?

I've heard it said that sometimes the longest journey is between your head and your heart.

Yeah, yeah. But once you do it I mean there's nothing better than that (laughs).

And you mentioned sometimes that, you said something about once or twice a year you think about this and? Drinking.

And I'm curious is there a specific time of the year that you think of this?

No, it's usually at - external things that happen to you. We've had a number of deaths just one after another and stuff like that, it's a hard time and things like that but somebody ask you to do something that you don't know if you should have to put up with situations, if it's your kids it's really close to your heart or if your grandkids or stuff like that and you don't know what to do. You've tried all kinds of stuff with them and they still go off and do what they, and they, its bad stuff and some days you just want to walk away from it and just, again escape. It doesn't happen very often, but it does happen. But I always think about it. It's something that ties a knot in one of your heartstrings right and it's tough to, to solve the problem. You run up against something and you don't know how to deal with it. That's what it is basically.

Ok. You talked about twenty-three reasons not to be there. I'm curious if you're willing to share a couple of those reasons?

(Laughs) Oh I quit drinking, am somewhat successful, I play in a good band, I'm a carpenter by trade, and I took up building inspections. I did all this stuff - why do I need to be here? (Laughs) I asked myself "am I worth it?" and that's when I really became quiet. I had a hard time saying yes. So if you do that if you don't answer yes then you're always chasing something right? And you never know what it is, so I had to make myself say yes.

So on the flip side of that, what reasons did you come up with after you said yes that made you want to stay there?

What I said was that I'm here; I said we're here to talk about healing all this healing all the time. What do I really know about healing? Not a heck of a lot. So what do these people know about healing? They probably know quite a bit so maybe I should just take their hand and let them lead me through and that's what I did and that's how I managed to stay there. Mind you I still, like I was really frantic in a lot of ways. I put it as frantic because I was just looking for somebody to screw up and not understanding things and finally they asked me to come out and go to the office with them. The counsellor and this one young fella, he was big like a football player almost, First Nations kid, he played a lot of soccer and stuff like that down there I guess but he was a big kid, he must weight close to three hundred pounds, young guy and he said what's going on with you? You're just like a firecracker just ready to explode all the time, said so intense. They were really scared is basically what it was and I didn't understand it at the time I look back on it now that's what it was. I was prepared for anything that was going to happen and they said well we want to try something with you, really quite simple they said. So they had that indoor/outdoor rug on the floor and they sat me on a chair like this, and the young fella came up and he put his arms on the back of my shoulders here and they said what we want you to do is push with your toes against this guy and he will provide resistance, and like I said he's a big kid so he said are you ready? So I got up on my toes like that and I started pushing and I pushed him right up against the wall.

That's how much energy we have, how much unresolved trauma you know causes energy and back in them days like I was just huge and I used to run and work hard. That's the only way I kept myself sort of regulated - a lot of physical exercise and carpentry provided all that stuff because you're always climbing around, you're packing heavy things, you're doing this or that you know being in the construction field and that's the only way I kept myself regulated kind of just keeping myself normal.

With all that pent up anger and energy that you had inside of you it was one way to keep it under control by keeping really physically active, running and just staying away from those memories.

Yeah so there's a lot of negative stuff that goes along with that because I'd like to say I would sleep for a couple of hours maybe in the evening then I'd be off playing music all night and that's another way to release all of that stuff, to keep your mind off what was going on in your head all the time. So it was and drink and all that kind of stuff, listen to all the crazy people and there was lots of them around (laughs) I was a kind of major part of that too (laughs) I didn't just sit there and listen, I participated (laughs).

So when you think about yourself back then, before you started your healing journey and when you think about yourself now, what are the major differences do you see of who you are now compared to what you used to be?

I think emotionally I can be who I want to be you know. I can respond to situations, not just the one answer, being hyper and all that kind of stuff. I can be if I want to be now but I don't have to be, it's not dictated to me and therein lies the freedom right? There's not just one response, there's a whole whack of them. You can look at them all and say this is the one I need here and you can do it just quick and usually it works (laughs) so it's again, that's where the freedom is right? That's where because you have a number of options. I talked to them about that, when I give my talks too. Once you take all that bad stuff out you have a chance to look around and kind of figure out what you need to do, and just go do it right. They were kind of looking at me like are you nuts? I've never been like that before (laughs) why you want to be like that, I said I don't want you to be like that, I'm just saying it's available to ya (laughs). Oh, they like it.

When I first started doing the presentations with the addictions agency I only had one slot at the beginning of the program and just the last one I finally got them to agree to give me a second one towards the end of the program. So I asked them, those rules that I talked to you about how are they affecting you? Have you started to use them? I say you're just about ready to leave the program now, how you gonna handle relapse. Somebody comes up to you and asks you oh it good to see you, you made it through the program - you wanna go and have a drink? You know. What are you going to tell them? How you going to respond? They kinda look, I don't know. Some of them can be kind of pretty persistent, I said don't think about what they're like. Think about what you're like. Tell them you're really busy and that you've got something to do right, right now (laughs). I said that's the way to handle it basically. Or tell them that you're busy learning, something positive. I'll see you around, but I'm not going to do this anymore I'm going to quit it. So I see some of them around yet because we all live in a small community right, I see them around and they're doing okay (laughs). So it's really interesting you know, like a, just, I

find that once I learned how to talk that I kept busy doing this kind of stuff quite a bit and hopefully it's stuff that can be used now or in the future, whatever because it's such a positive thing how can you ignore it?

So I know the one thing you said to me before you talked about how a long time ago you were very quiet, you were very reserved and you didn't say much. You kind of just stood back from the crowd, and compared to that now you said you find yourself much more outgoing I guess and you talk more? You're much more verbal I guess in how you approach things?

Yeah, I'm breaking that "No Talk" rule (laughs).

And speaking of those rules, I actually want to talk a little bit about those. What are the rules I guess and what are the things that you follow now in your life as opposed to the rules of "no talk", and I can't remember them all you said there was four of them that you said specifically. So how have you changed that for yourself? What are your rules or philosophy that you follow now?

Well I talk about this, again when I give the presentation. I say are those four rules handy at times? And they look and "I don't know" they said and I said I think they are I said, when it comes to safety, especially for kids I says when you tell them not to go out into the street - you mean it. Obey without question right. When there's a fire people are all around, those things do come in handy now and again. I said not with your wife though (laughs). Anyway I said what I find is that you have a choice. They are handy at times and you gotta know when. So if you understand that part then there's freedom in there right? That's where you find your freedom. I said a lot of those stuff on this side you find you use ninety to ninety-five percent of your time, the seven habits and stuff you know and they kind of look at me and I said that's where the freedom lies - knowing when to use things, the tools that you have. That's the wonderfulness of all of this. So they start understanding after a while but until they actually start internalizing a lot of this it's hard to understand you know. What I'm telling you, you kind of listen and stuff like that but once you kind of go through the process of learning the whole thing for yourself then you can start seeing where things work for you I'm just talking about how things work for me right?

It's personal for you then?

Yeah, yeah so I try to do things and if something wrong has been done to me then I have to respond. I try to work at that discipline and not be silent again or invisible, I don't like that. I'm better than that right? (Laughs) I don't want to put up with that.

No, you probably shouldn't if you don't have to. Okay I have one last question. What has kept you on your healing path?

It's exploration. You know it's going places where man has never, ever gone before in your head right (laughs). There's a universe in there whether we know it or not. So we just go looking around in there. I try different things, work at humour. Man I tell you that's just some of the greatest stuff because that's what we found down there too you know. We started using humour and everybody was just belly laughing endlessly (laughs). That lady, she's a non-Native lady and

she always says when she goes through this program I always listens to the humor that you folks have and it doesn't matter where you're from the humour is always kind of the same. It has a specific vein for it and it's so great (laughs) so yeah and it's always an adventure I find. Every day has, something that's, there's some slow days and stuff like that but a lot of the time boy I tell it's just great to be. Like I have some down days and stuff like that but I had some friends around here that I would go and see and they were always really strong personalities and stuff and they'd have their own little stories to tell you and they always got a bit of humour once I hanging around with them for five minutes and then I'll be participating with them too, just like being goofy and everything like that (laughs) but it's always nice to be able to have that choice. You know you don't have to remain where you are in that blue mood of sorts and kind of go and do this stuff.

So it helps to have those supports out there, friends you can turn to when you're feeling like you are really down and you need that extra interaction with somebody.

Yeah, yeah. Or if you go to the store or something and you see somebody that can take a joke and you start spouting off. Surprising what you hear some days. (Laughs) Going down I drive from Victoria to Nanaimo or something like that there's one little place that there's all these fast food stores or outlets there and we went there that one time and ordered coffee. Back in them days I got the big one and I had to put two sweeteners in there and I said three cream and two sweeteners and that lady looks at her partner three cream and two sweeties she says (laughs) I just looked at her. But it's just one of those little injections that you get every now and again. Anyways.

So when you say that you explore, in your exploring - your mind obviously? So I'm just trying to get a clear picture of what you mean by that? Like you have thoughts that come up and your exploring those thoughts or?

Trying different things in different ways, trying to make life feel like the humdrum things of life more enjoyable or enduring. You have a set of rules and you try this - let's try this one for this situation (laughs).

It sounds like a bit of creativity and thought going into it - a bit of an adventure maybe?

Yeah, yeah and people look at you - who in the hell are you anyway? (Laughs) and why are you doing this? And so it gets people going again, like you're not texting, you're actually having a human interaction right and some of those things can be pretty interesting at times. So it's nice (laughs).

So is there anything else you would like to add or anything else that you'd like to say?

Umm, I don't think so right now. The only thing that I kind of - you know about my words going nowhere. You're doing some stuff that has possibilities of helping change a lot of things I think you know. I don't want to see those things go silent. Putting them away in the archives or destroying things. You know I'm not too upset, the stuff that I've gone through. That's one of the things that the lady said down there - she said when you first come here you're thinking about all

the stuff that happened to you and you think you're the only one that has gone through all this stuff when in fact it is happening all over the world yet today and so don't, it's not something that's really personal it's something that's more widespread than we all realize. It's the nature of this stuff that makes you feel isolated and stuff like that. So that's the way I kind of look at it now. I've gone through some pretty harsh times and a lot of the memories that I have are about things that are pretty negative, and pretty scary, but it's not something that I alone have gone through so don't worry about sharing it, it's all pretty standard actually for this situation. Trauma is trauma right? What I'm wanting is for a lot more people to do this and this is what I've gone through and this is what I've done to settle it, and this is now what I'm experiencing once I've settled all that negative stuff and it's there for you if you want it, so that's the way we should view it I think.

Okay well I can promise you that what's happening here is not going to go silent as much as I can and we talked a little about that in terms of the fact that I want to have this information published on some level and be available as a resource to other people who are not First Nations to help them learn how to work with our people because we do have a lot of people in the Yukon that want to support and help our people but I don't think they necessarily have the right tools to do that and I'd like to make sure they have the options, and especially I'd like them to know about the history and education and educate them about our people here. I think that's probably the most important thing that I am focusing on and doing this as well and the thing, the fact that it's never been done in the Yukon so it's very important to have this done.

Yep and what is going on now is glaring evidence of what is not happening right? So okay?

Thank you.

Story 4: William's Story

My name is William Frank Carlick and my mother was originally from the Kaska Nation. My dad was from the Tahltan Nation. I've grown up part of my life in residential school and I spent my summers at home with my mom, dad, brothers, and sisters. After graduation from high school I met and married my beautiful wife and we've been together since 19xx. We just had our anniversary a couple of days ago. Awesome, and that's probably one of the reasons why I'm still on my healing path is because I've got a good home and a strong wife to keep me going in a good direction. That's what's needed - a good relationship in your life because you know there are other relationships that can take you in other directions.

I go back and remember my days before I went to residential school, I remember my sisters used to be taken to residential school and I remember them getting into a school bus, what they call a school bus, but it was more like a truck. Then I remember jumping in with them and they kind of laughed at me because they knew I wasn't going to be able to go, but I wanted to go to where they were going and I didn't realize what a sad decision that was made on my behalf at that age of five. I remember them being gone and never seeing them for a long time and the one time I looked down the road and wondered where they went because a couple hours before they were right there with us talking and laughing and enjoying our family relationship and next thing there was kind of like a void. They were gone, and you kind of accept it because at that age you don't understand life.

And then eventually I got to go but when I was six years old and I don't remember very much of how I was able to survive all by myself with a large group of other First Nation boys about my age because we were segregated from the girls and so we never saw very much of them except when we went to meals and I remember distinctly one time I was watching, we used to play in a part of the residential school playroom, they called it a playroom but it was a room with windows that were too high for you to look out and see what was going on in the outside world but light came in and then there was benches, green benches that were all along the wall and when we're not playing we're sitting on those benches watching others play. I remember I was sitting there watching this skinny man hollering away at some kids about my age and I was thinking to myself why are you hollering at them, like who are you kind of attitude I had at such a young age because I didn't understand who this guy was and why he was hollering at the kids.

But eventually I guess we learned to listen to him because he was the authority. He showed no emotional attachment to anybody. Any emotion that came out of him all the time we were there was anger. He was always angry at everybody. It seemed like he didn't want to be there, but for some reason because of his religious beliefs he felt that he had to be there and do what he was doing. I imagine that he thought he was doing good, he was looking after a bunch of kids and making sure they didn't get hurt and that they got to bed on time and then in the morning he hollered at everybody to get out of bed and get up and wash and cleaned up and dressed up and go for breakfast and then head off to school.

We had the nuns teaching us. I remember all of those things and I don't remember them in a fond way, I just remember them as that's what happened and then eventually my brothers came and joined me and I remember them looking at me as somebody, that was there to support them

which I did I guess because I was the older of all. Two other brothers, but it was something that I look back on and don't spend too much time on those memories because to me none of that was worth spending too much time talking about other than finding reasons to do it for others benefit, not for mine. Because I actually lived it so, I saw what it was worth and when I got older and looked back on it and saw what it was worth. Maybe the only good thing I got out of it was the education, which was important I guess for later on in life but other than that, emotionally it was a bust. Spiritually it was, we were forced every Sunday to go down to the church part of the residential school and sit there and stand there and listen to all the things that were said by the priest and watch him go through his rituals and never took stock of what he was saying as anything of any value, and we kind of resisted anything they did or said because of the fact that you really don't want to be there.

Every day it was a feeling that I want to go home, I want to get out of here. It's like a jail without bars and to me it was especially at residential school it was kind of like emotionally sterile like you kind of grow up from that. You look back and that's where, that emotional sterilization was a big part of my struggle because I wasn't able to have any emotion. Any emotion that was had was kind of blocked out because you didn't want to show them that you were hurting and what they were doing was accomplishing what they wanted to happen. Later on you learned the whole reason was to kind of reset our cultural belief system and at that time I didn't realize it but my grandparents that were alive probably knew about it and they touched me I thought in spiritual ways to help me later on in life when I needed it.

Eventually I made it out of the school system with a graduation certificate and looked at all the ones that graduated with me that made it also, but that wasn't the start of anything good. To me I was leaving a place I didn't want to be and finally get out into the real world where I had to make a living because my parents weren't stable either because they'd been through cultural genocide themselves because their land and culture was taken over by a big mining outfit and the only thing they had to offer them was alcohol and they were, all my family, and grandparents were all really impacted by alcohol. We grew up seeing them so stuck with alcohol and thinking back how bad it was when we went home to see its impact. My family would wait for our mom and dad to come out of the bar at closing time knowing that when they do come out of the bar they won't be in any condition to give us any kind of support. So it was kind of demoralizing as a child growing up and later on also instilled a kind of hate for that town, Cassiar and that place that some people call home but I didn't. I never called it home.

So two things were not working in my favour, but the only thing that worked in my favour was the education that I got out of it that I was able to utilize later on but the main big component was I came away with, was a good, hard work ethic because I remember every time we went home for the summer a couple of months. The only way we had anything to eat was my dad and mom would take us out on the land and we'd spend weeks on the land. Going after, hunting moose and once we hunt moose we'd have to pack it all the way home which was a long way over the mountains so out of that I got a really good work, hunting, good hard work ethic about survival on land. And then at that time they were cutting wood for [xxxx] which is a mining town that is no longer in existence, but it still has a lot of remnants of its existence on the land from an environmental perspective but I remember them cutting wood and known the way we could make a living was we had to cut wood with our dad and as a little boy we'd all be packing

wood and piling it and then he'd get paid for it and then we would never see him for a week. He'd go up to [xxxx] with all, and then that's what happened on a regular basis. So from that I got a good work ethic from that, from working hard even though we never saw the benefit of it but it's also part of the colonialism and residential school, they're all hand in hand of what they did to our parents but also what they did to us as children of the parents.

So when I graduated from school I went back and went to the place they were living and the first thing I did was when I got home, what was called home, and saw my mother and my dad drunk I just looked at them and said to myself I don't want any more of this so I kind of turned around and hitch-hiked out of there and never went back. Just recently I spent some time with my younger brother and he remembers those days about when we came home and all of a sudden, as the older brother I just kind of disappeared out of their lives for years and went out there and did my own survival work at different places during my own living and basically just survive on my own and living alone and I did that because I needed to. I didn't want to get back and join them in their alcohol lifestyle and I finished school and I didn't want to go back to school because I had enough of that.

So I continued working at different jobs over the years and then eventually good was on my side and I was able to meet my wife and from there we spent our lives together and we had two beautiful children. I looked after them, and worked and gave them a good home and then when our son became a young man he passed on into the Spirit World and we, at that time we were able to deal with it to a certain extent but not fully because at that time we were both close. Earlier on when he was a young boy I was able to touch base with some spiritual teachers in Alberta and they kind of opened a belief system door for me to look at. From what I heard and experienced at that time I thought well this is different so this is more culturally relevant to me than what I've been taught spiritually so far, so to me I was more interested in that point and I kept in tune with it, not at a consistent basis but just to make sure that I understood that what they were saying is relevant and made sense to me.

So when we moved back up to [xxxx] from Alberta. We spent nine years down there - I was able to meet another person that was at residential school and he was running a ceremony so I went and joined him at a couple of ceremonies. I went to a sweat with him and the teachings that I got from those ceremonies, oh made so much sense because they all related to me as an individual and those around me. The consistent way of focusing on what was important as far as the teachings and also the experiences I had at those sweats and the fasting that we did and at that time I kind of thought that's what I wished for. The healing and all of the expectations was going to happen in a manner that was going to be a little faster than what I finally realized. The healing journey, and the experiences and expectations do happen but they don't happen in a timeline that I had expected. But at the end of the day it was all good because the teaching and experiences that I had and shared with others, including my own wife and daughter, and my late son was all good because it helped us all in our journey of life to really put a perspective as to why we exist as human beings - what our purpose is here that we're living through what we call life, and what is life? Like all of the things that were important but I didn't realize were important at that time until going to ceremonies. That's what changed me I'm not going to be changed one hundred percent because no body's perfect and never will be perfect, but at least I have an idea as to what

my purpose is and what my expectations are and I can only share it with others if they have reason to believe and a way to understand what I believe.

But at the same time the thing that keeps coming back to me is the final goal of myself which may happen, or may not happen is to be kind and compassionate. That's been quite the journey because in order to become kind and compassionate I have to learn how to get rid of anger because wow, fourteen years and more of dealing with parents that were not really stable creates a lot of anger in you. You feel that everything is so hopeless and the feeling as a child of hopelessness is something that you don't let go of easily. So anger was a good tool because it kept people away. But it was also a destructive tool because you didn't grow from it and when I say you don't grow it's spiritually you need to grow in order to understand your purpose as you go through what you call life. But anger and jealousy and all those other negative tools that are there, greed are all there so easily and readily available on a regular basis. I always have to keep that in mind when the time comes is now I make the choice. I have the ability and the control to make a choice so when they come close I look at it and say do I want to use these tools? Do I need to use these tools? And if not, then what can I use? And one of the things that I use as of late is the understanding that I have no control over other people, other individuals of how they act, behave, think, or talk or believed because that's their choice. I have only one thing that's available to me is I have a choice to deal with what I have control over which is what I say, what I think, what I see, what I do. I always try to make them a choice where it acknowledges that today is a new day and I have good reasons to use a new day to change things that I haven't changed yesterday and I use that as a tool that is ongoing. It's a good tool to use for an individual dealing with whether or not they want to feel emotional about anything and what I've been taught through the Ancestors in ceremonies is we feel how we choose to feel and I kind of visit that emotion and that thought and I realize yes it is true. We choose how we want to feel and that is such a powerful understanding to be able to know that and if you're not told that then you don't realize those things are some of the things we have control over.

The ultimate belief is that through ceremony I'm able to connect with my Ancestors and that they come and help me and they hear me. What I pray for, what I'm asking for and they do come and help whether it's for healing or for others which is a lot of the ceremony prayers go out to healing for other people so that they can get over their different addictions. Like addictions to drugs, alcohol which is so rampant, and to abuse, all kinds of abuse and to acknowledge them and to stop being a part of that so all of those things are all a part of what we do. Is part of the teachings we get from the Ancestors, but what they told us, what they say is that also the fact that the work has to be done by the individual which is myself. I have to do the work, I have to go out of my way to make things happen for myself and for others and one of the things that they said is when you pray for yourself, you don't pray for yourself individually, you pray for others and that way you've covered yourself already by praying for others.

They also instilled the belief in me that is the path that I'm on right now is like walking on the edge of a thin paper. You can fall on either side at any given time but at the same time it's not the falling that's really an issue it's finding a way to get back up and continue on the path. To me it's not hard for me right now to do that because I always ask for help from my home fire which is a belief system that was given to us it looks after, first the home fire is looking after the spirit within me - the gift of life that was given to me. It's not mine, I don't own it, I just have the

responsibility of looking after it and then when my time is up that responsibility is taken and given back, but that's my belief. That's what kept me going to this point and kept me open minded and setting goals of trying to include everybody to help them either by praying for them and doing what I could do, to share my belief system with them which is a template that I use that can be very effective for them if they follow their Ancestors.

Really being grateful is another thing that is really important for me because everything I experience and able to have is because of the fact that I believed that not only do we have to work for it but because of blessings coming my way I accept them as blessings the good things that coming my way and by helping other people whether through sharing my belief system with them is also another way of sharing a changing of understanding for others who will hear what I say. It will be enough for them to change their way of thinking so they can start changing themselves and that's important because for me to survive this long through all of the things that I have gone through personally is I can only put in one belief and understanding. I have a job to do, and until that job is done, that's the reason I'm still here and when I get that job done I guess then my purpose of life is accomplished.

For me it's also sharing the tools with others as to using my belief system which is the same belief system my Ancestors had that had allowed them to survive for thousands of years on this land without all the comforts of life we have today. How they relied on the animals, the plants, the water, the air, the wind to be able to keep connected with the universe and in that way they were able to survive as a people. That's what's important also is that my survival as an individual is important, but it's only as important as the survival as the people around me because then, everything is all connected. We're all connected - spiritually with all people and all of creation of the universe, but the Creator has created the basic understanding that keeps me going and to continue and not to spend too much time looking back on what happened yesterday or years and years ago. Because to me how I accepted what happened in residential school and what happened when I grew up with my family, my mother and dad and all the people that are around me that were abusing alcohol and all of that. When I went, when I visited that and looked at it, what I came back with, for me is to accept it as something and just learn from because as a child I had no control over any of that so as a child I didn't create, so I didn't carry any of that responsibility with me. That's why I didn't need to carry that with me today as extra baggage.

I was able to just let it go and just recently, it's still there, recently I went to visit my younger brother because he's still dealing with grief because our mother just passed away not even a year ago and because of my spiritual belief I was able to accept her moving on into the Spirit World. My personal belief system allows me to deal with it in a good way because I understand if they were able to share where they are with me, that they would share nothing but good and happiness because that's what I believe. When our son passed away, we were able to, me and my wife and daughter were able to deal with all of that grief and by doing what we had to do which was not run away from it, not use it as an excuse to destroy ourselves but we use it as an understanding to prepare ourselves for our journey and once we're finished here. But also the fact that dealing with grief is an ongoing time experience and ceremony helped us to deal with that in a good way. The Ancestors were there to help us over time to let us know that they were there to help us and if we continued to believe in them they were there to help us and that's where I'm still at is continue to believe.

So I went to share that time with my younger brother because he doesn't have the solid belief system yet, but I was able to share my understandings with him so he can accept what he has no control over. That change happens, and change will continue to happen and all you have to do is be prepared and accept what you've got no control over. I was able to visit some of the places that I grew up as a child and kind of spend a little time there remembering different situations there. Then when I left there I felt good because that's all you look for is the good part of what happened and that's what you want to remember is the good things so I was able to do that and same with my brother. We went back to some of the places that we spent as a child and reminisce about people that are no longer here and places, and what happened to those places and had some good laughs and it was all good. It was all part of healing. To me it was a journey that I had to make because my brother needed some kind of a support and I'm glad to be there for him and he left a little bit stronger and so when we left my mom's resting site. A beautiful place between a nice big lake and between two big towering mountains and I left him there and he stayed on and then later on when he caught up to me he said as soon as you left he said I was standing by dad's grave and he said I heard a wolf howl and I said wow. I said obviously I didn't hear it because I didn't need to hear it because I've already accepted the situation, and I understood it and my mom and my dad probably understood that I've accepted it but my younger brother still had a way to be acknowledged that there's things that he needs to accept. Grandmother Wolf howling probably was a sign to him, that acknowledged to him that everything's good, everything's okay and he needed that and maybe that's what gives him the tool to continue.

So on this journey that I'm on I always try to find a purpose to include others in their healing path and change them in some way so that whatever they're struggling with there are answers out there as to how they can deal with their struggles, whether it's addiction, grieving, and so I thought about this healing canoe. Because this healing canoe was something that was created a number of years ago by an Alaskan artist and his vision was, and his ceremony - and he shared it with me was that he needed to create a canoe that would be used for healing. So he came over and he started the process of building the healing canoe out on the land with some youths and turned them into professional carvers. So they spent time on there and every chip that they chipped off that healing canoe represented a lost one, or somebody that was lost to violence, residential school, drugs, and alcohol, disease and also their thoughts of where they were spiritually and individually was embedded into that canoe. So over the three months that they created this healing canoe they took all the chips and put it into the fire and burned all the chips with all those individuals names on it that represented those that were lost to all those different things that we call life and then the canoe was created and it sat for years as an artistic piece of work at our culture centre. Then it was being misused so I thought well we have to bring it back to life again. We have to use it for what's its purpose was which is to help people heal so I thought about getting other people to believe in using it to go from Whitehorse to the Moosehide Gathering which happens every two years. I thought that idea came from the same individual carver who carved a healing totem pole for residential school. I'm pretty sure it was for residential school but the idea came because he paddled down from [xxxx], Alaska down to [xxxx], Alaska for the celebration with his canoe and he wanted to do it but he wasn't able to make it this year.

We got a number of people involved and they all believed in this and it was do-able and in a short time we went ahead and pulled it together. Sure enough, we were able to overcome all the obstacles and got a group together from as far away as Vancouver to come up and join us on this healing journey from Whitehorse to Moosehide. I always said to them that this is not only a journey from a destination, it's about getting back to the land where the Ancestors have said that all the Ancestors are missing us because we spend too much time in the city. We don't spend much time on land where our Ancestors used to spend all their time on the land and we need to revisit and re-do that. So what I did was sponsor a ceremony for this journey and at that ceremony we made offerings and asked for everybody to be looked after on that journey that their home fires will be looked after. That while they're away from their home fires and their community will be safe and that when we make that journey and when we connect with the Ancestors on the land that they will help us, help the community heal. That it will help people start working to get together which were, kind of everybody is starting to move apart.

So all of those things were the goal of the healing journey, that had a purpose is to reconnect with the Ancestors on the land. Do all the things that we hope for, our individual self because it's important for the individual self to continue to look after themselves, to help themselves heal, and grow. Because only when the individual is healed and on that healing path are they able to help others, their family, their relationship, their community, and then the country at large. So all of those had a purpose so when I originally put that out there, there was a lot of excitement about it because it had a real purpose to it that everybody got on board, wanted to be there, was there and we took it and put it together and a journey was made to Moosehide and the energy that we picked up was so positive, and still positive to this very day. The fact that we talk about it creates good energy because that's what it was all about, creating a good energy and the healing canoe is now alive and we gave it a name. We call it "ātsuq" which is grandma in southern Tutchone. We say grandma look after us as long as we look after her so it was a partnership all the way down the river. When we connected with the Ancestors and when we saw any one of the Ancestors whether it was sheep on the mountain that watched us go by, or whether it's a duck in the water or a loon on a lake, or a fish jumping out of the water, or an eagle that flew by, or a beaver that swam by - any one of those, or bear that came to the shore of the river, any one of those is our Ancestors that were there to help us. We took every opportunity to thank them for showing us that they were there to help us and acknowledge their presence and we were able to ask them for help and we told them what we needed and we kept on our journey and individual.

After we did that they went on their own and continued their work and it was good because my belief was that out on the land all the animals are pure, the water is pure, the land is pure, and when we sleep at night the dreams are pure so all of those things are all good. When we went through the communities, the different communities that were struggling with all their problems and issues we kind of picked up all that negative energy at the communities and we carried it down the river with us and spread it out on the land and then we picked up all the good energy. When we went into the next community we were able to share that good energy with them all and it flowed freely to everybody and anybody that was there knowingly or unknowingly whether they believe it or not.

That was one of the good, positive things that we need to do more of is putting together meaningful gatherings with a purpose. They've had a lot of that going on from different

organizations but one of the things that I've struggled with over the years is we've maintained a ceremony for as long as I've been involved with it since 19xx. I've been involved, me and my wife have been involved with a ceremony and all the costs come out of our own pocket. Like none of this was ever given to us by any organization to maintain and I don't say that in a negative way, but I say that as the most effective way of healing is the one that has the least amount of support. It's a contradiction but it's an experience that I see that money readily flows to all the other ways of what I would call, temporary treatment for nothing else. What I'm involved with is the ongoing continuous. It's not about one workshop coming together and then putting out something and that's the end of it, there's no follow-up. The one I'm dealing with is continuous. Now that we've made that connection with our Ancestors it's a continuous thing it's always available to me, to my family and whoever else want to be a part of it. But the thing is like this journey too is all out of, pretty well, there are a lot of donations that were made but there are out of pocket expenses and a lot of volunteering to make it happen. A lot of individuals that are going to benefit from it knowingly or unknowingly are the end result of what the whole purpose was and to me it's a blessing. To me that is what I look at, at the end of the day is the blessings that come with things like that because my belief system tells me that because there's so few of our people that are involved with this traditional belief system that the blessings are piling up and not very many of them are being given out so whoever is taking advantage of it will be happy with what they get.

The thing about that is the ceremony or the sweat is just something that I have been so involved with, and been so grateful for and the teachings that come from it and the songs that you get from it is just so incredible. We were able to sing some of the songs down on the land to the animals and drum, it was so powerful. We woke up the Ancestors in so many places and they were so grateful to hear that again and they haven't heard that for so long. That's what needs to be done more from our people is that we have to get back to the land and start awakening the Spirits to help us more because one of the things that I was taught in the ceremony is that nothing is impossible when you have the Ancestors working with you and the Creator. To be grateful to the Creator for his creation and the belief system I have is one where you don't have to be a member, and it doesn't criticize all the other belief systems. It looks at them and accepts all belief systems and that's our traditional Ancestors' belief system of believing that there's so much out there to help us if we only allow it. Whether we use dreams as learning and healing tool, or whether we use all the medicines that are out on the land to help us but also to continue to try to change for the good - to keep changing for the good.

Yep, and to keep praying to the Creator to give thanks every day and make our offerings, to acknowledge the Creator every day because life to me is not what happened yesterday, or not what happened last year, or not what happened years ago. Life when I look back on life, life is right now, what I do right now and to say I'm going to be doing this tomorrow, and I'm going to be doing that next week to me is kind of arrogant. It's telling the Creator and the Ancestors that I already know I'm going to live that long when I don't have that ability to live past what I have today because being alive right now is what's important. Being grateful that when I do a reality check that I don't have any sickness and to be grateful for that. To do a reality check and say you have a new day to change the way I am whole way I am when I wake up in the morning and give thanks for that, to always be grateful. Those are important to me and to acknowledge that my wife is still here with me, my daughter is still with me. We have grandchildren that are part of

our lives that we need to give them tools to survive because their life are going to be different and how important it is for them to be connected with the Ancestors because they're going to need that even more so.

To me that and still getting them to live and understand and accept living out on the land is more important because the city is all polluted. There's no help in the city for individuals' spiritually, it's spiritually dead. I want to let them know that because that's what's real to me, but also to prepare ourselves, that's what's important because things are changing, times are changing but there's not very many people that are really in tune to what's going on and it's a sad, sad way to see it. A lot of our youth right now, I took a reality check with when we went down on the canoe journey and we brought a youth and how disconnected the youth was with reality because now youth are more connected to online games as reality, when in actual fact it's going to be their undoing. Put them out on the land and they wouldn't know how to survive even though their survival and food and everything is right there with them. They don't have those tools so that was a reality check for the youth is how important it is to them to start waking up because if they don't they're in for a really tough, rough ride. They think I had it rough, I think it's going to be worse for them. Maybe with the change, things will change.

When we went on that healing canoe journey everybody was giving good energy and that good energy it was - here it is do what you need to do with it. And depending on where you are at in life that good energy was going to go in that direction and I hope that good energy for me that I created grows. Other people I don't know what they did with it, but they got it and what they use it and how they use it that's their choice they can use to, in so many different ways. But I'm sure happy to be able to participate in something that was good. It was so good I wish the system in the healing organization would promote and participate and create more of those situations for others because to me it needs to be done soon. There are some other things that I believe and I'm not willing to share because those individuals are going to have to hear it for themselves because if I said it they'd just tune me out. Not because they don't want to because they don't want to hear what I want to say.

That's it, okay. I do have some questions just mostly clarifying questions, so I'm just going to go back to the beginning. So you went to school at six years old. How long were you there?

Well I got out of school when I was twenty so that's sixteen years. I was born in 19xx and was six when I went to IRS [Indian residential school]. In 19xx I left, I would have been thirteen when I left residential school. Then went to a residential school in [xxxx] for three years, went to a second residential school until 19xx. We think it would be twelve, no, that would be twelve years because. Yeah that would be about twelve because six to twelve would be eighteen or nineteen, I was out of school. I graduated in 19xx so I went to school and I think I started going to school I think it was 19xx, 19xx or 19xx somewhere around there.

Okay. I know from talking with your wife, she mentioned that you were originally from a First Nations in the Interior of British Columbia?

[xxxx] area around [xxxx], BC.

And you transferred up here to the First Nation in [xxxx]?

Yeah because our tribal laws that are still in place because there's the Creator's Law which it doesn't change, there's nothing going to get you out of that one if you break any of those Creator's Law, then there's the Natural Law dealing with nature and then there's the Tribal Law so all three of those are part of the system that we've always had and hasn't change but it's really part of who we are. So the Tribal law is always the Wolf and Crow. That never changed and that should never, ever change and then there's the Tribal Law also states that when you marry into a First Nation through your wife you got to go through your wife's First Nations which I did and it worked out for me because my wife's Crow and I'm wolf and I married into the Southern Tutchone so it was good.

Okay, so if you don't mind me asking - how old are you now?

Sixty-two, they call me an Elder, I accepted that because to me I could have been just an old person because there's a difference between just an old person and an Elder.

What's that difference?

The difference is an old person is just somebody that just grows old and an Elder is hopefully someone that does something for others.

Okay, and it sounds like you have done that throughout your life.

Well I've tried to because for me every time I've tried to do something is to benefit somebody in a good way, in some way whether or not it helps change them in how they go about their life on a daily basis, individually there are other people. I don't do any of that to get any kind of acknowledgment or be put on a pedestal it's kind of something that I look at and I really don't want to go in that direction because to me that is not important, that's not why I do these things. I don't want to make myself look like I'm above everybody else when I'm not. I want to be represented as equal with the opportunity to share with them what I think they also have but they need to bring out in themselves and that's what I work to do and to me that's when I look at it that's what it's all about.

You talked about ceremonial aspects and spirituality at the beginning and you said you had gained spirituality different from what you had before so I just wanted to clarify what was it before? Was it what you learned in residential school that you were talking about?

Yes it was about how the previous religious system that I was part of it was so limited, it was limited because of the individual teaching methods like it was imposed on me. When you impose something on somebody they resist it right off the bat so I didn't, there was a point in my life because of that. I remember that distinctly, that I at a point in in my life I acknowledged to myself that if that's the way life is I don't want to believe it so at that point had no belief system. Literally, I told myself I don't believe nothing which is not a good thing to spend your life in any time in your life without a belief system because it's so important, but anyways because I touched base with some very good spiritual people they enlightened me out of that mode. I

accept what they teach but I look at what I accept as a spiritual belief system is more accepting of so many different aspects that are so important for me to grow spiritually and it changes the belief and understanding of everything that's around me that wasn't available to me as a spiritual belief before. All the animals, Grandfather Rock, all the animals and plants are all living entities that are just as alive as I am.

So if I understand what you're saying it's more about not dissing what they believe but to be respectful of other people's beliefs and this is what you believe?

Exactly, to understand that there's another belief system out there that is all encompassing and that I'm only a small part of creation. I'm not above and beyond all of creation, I'm part of them, the web of life that is being part of the web of life that the animals are really important as to who I am spiritually and physically. The plants are all a part of who I am spiritually and physically and accepting that and not questioning that is part of my belief system. And how important it is for all the people around you are all part of that web of life and how we have to look at individuals and change our attitude towards them whether or not we accept how they live which is sometimes really tough. Because you get challenged right to the max with some people about whether or not you really want to pray for them but at the end of the day you have to, out of respect, and working towards kindness and compassion which is the ultimate goal.

I've also heard it said that to live the life in loving kindness, to put that out there. I think you've already answered this question but I'll just ask it, just in case there is any more information you want to add to it. When you talk about other tools that you use, and thinking back to what you said about the tools that you said you've used is there anything else that you'd like to add to it?

Tools - the main tools that I use is prayer. Plus at the end of the day there will come a time when all we'll have available to us is the prayer. That's the ultimate tool. That's one thing I guess the residential school taught me is how to pray. Even though now the prayers are a little more sincere rather than just repetition. Because the prayers now, they have meaning. They become emotional, to me that is a sign that it's meaningful and it's accepted.

Okay, so when you talked about the work that you've done for yourself and the person, like the person has to do their own work for themselves and also to help others as part of that process. So do you feel that a part of your healing journey has been not just about yourself but to help other people with what you've learned about your own healing path that you've been on?

That's true because the healing canoe journey that we just made wasn't possible to do by myself. It taught me you can't do nothing by yourself you always have to include others, in that journey is a good example of it because you had to bring other people in there to make it happen as a team and it's the same as a ceremony too you can't have a ceremony, you couldn't have a ceremony by yourself. Sure there is fasting out on land for doing that but it has a purpose and a place for that. If you want to help other people, you could probably help other people that way too but the ultimate help would be, I shouldn't say it's an ultimate, one of the help that I see is that is effective is a sweat. Like you go out there and you cut all the wood that is required for the fire, sacred fire and you go out there and you collect all of the Grandfather Rocks for the

ceremony and you go out and get all the Grandmother Willows to build the ceremony sweat lodge and then you go out and get the materials that you have to get from the local stores and you have to build with all new materials. So all of that comes, has to be, nothings free. Somebody has to cover it but at the end of the day you end up doing most of that just because you want to participate in that beautiful ceremony when it's created and when you go through and making it happen. At the same time you know that others are going to come and participate and whether they bring anything, or they just come there for their own healing and they leave one time only, or come again more than once. You know to me it's their choice. You made the sweat lodge, you participate in creating the ceremony and other people came and benefited from it in some way and left. Maybe I still believe they are benefiting in some way to this very day, even the ones that just come once but that's where they're at in life, that's what they choose to do but to me that's what the ceremony is all about. It's about including others without asking them why they're there, or questioning their motives or, because to me it's not about them, and I'm not saying that in a negative way. It's about me going into a ceremony and then being able to get the teachings that I get from there and getting the healing and help that I personally need but also offer it for others. So those are all the benefits I see from what goes on and to me it's such a powerful, beautiful way to deal with a lot of our life, challenges, for no other better word because it's only a challenge if we make it a challenge.

So it sounds like this process, this journey is individual but also at the same time it's not individual, it's also connecting with other people who are part of that ceremony and the process of putting it together is something you can't do alone. You have to do with other people and it's about that interconnectedness with the spiritual, the mental, the physical, and the emotional of all of that and on some levels its individual but it's also sharing and it's also working together.

Exactly, it's all-inclusive.

It sounds very respectful by not questioning why someone is there, but just accepting that they are here for their reasons and allowing them to experience what they need to experience and take what they need from that particular ceremony.

It's true because when they go there and they make an offering for whatever help they want, I don't listen to what they're asking for and rightfully so, it's their participation under their own situation and that's being respectful, yeah. To me being in the sweat lodge is the ultimate place where the ultimate respect has to be made because you can't fool the Ancestors, or you can't fool the Creator, you can't fool the Ancestors like at the end of the day they know everything already. They know everything already so you're not going to fool them and to me, it's if I go there in a disrespectful way then I'm just wasting my time, so ultimately to me it's just I want to pick up something good from there to grow, to learn and to also experience because all of that happens there and it's a beautiful place, beautiful place. Beautiful experience, beautiful teachings and are so readily available.

Okay so one question I had out of all this and I think I already know the answer, but I'll ask it. When you are on your own healing journey and you're helping others - do you find the helping and supporting of others also beneficial to your own healing?

Absolutely because to me that's what we're put down here for is to help others. Sometimes you can question that helping others. It's easier to do nothing in a lot of ways than to help others but at the end of the day my belief system is that it's important for me to count my blessings and I spend more time doing that because we can become so arrogant and end up losing so much.

Okay, you talked about the healing canoe as alive and it was given a name and the name "Āsuq̄"?

Āsuq̄.

How do you spell that?

That's Southern Tutchone "Āsuq̄"; probably just spell it how it sounds. I don't know if there's a vocabulary for Southern Tutchone. They probably do have it, but I don't have it. My daughter would know. She took the Native language.

Okay because I have it spelled "a-t-s-u-a" but I'm pretty sure probably not right?

It's "grandma" in Southern Tutchone.

Okay. Yeah I'll ask her [his daughter] and see what she says. So when you talked about having gatherings and that those gatherings have to be very meaningful and it has to have a purpose can you clarify further what purpose they should have?

Well a good example is when our son passed away years ago, in order to deal with the grief that it created for my wife as a mother, my daughter as the sister, and myself as the dad is we didn't want to forget him, and so we wanted to acknowledge him in a good way. So what we did was put together during the hockey tournament where there was a lot of other negative activities on that weekend, there was nothing there that was a non-alcohol healing event. So I created this Indigenous music competition in his honour and we give away a brand new guitar every year in his name to who we thought was a good candidate for as a youth coming up with promising talent. So we put that on and that competition was at the beginning was based on creating the event but at the end of day we didn't know who would end up showing up to participate. That first one was really good, it was great to see the participants and the fans that did show up and it was a free event because at the end of the day it wasn't about people paying their way in but also there was cash prizes given out to the ones that we thought deserved it. So that went on for four years, we did that for four years because our son was playing hockey, his number was four. We did that for four years and it became such a good event that we moved it to the culture center, which is a bigger venue, and that whole event was based on dealing with grief and also using music as a healing tool. So to me that allowed other people to come there and deal with grief too by using music or playing music as a way. So they had a forum to participate. So that's where a lot of youths and individuals came to that event because of that. And me and my wife, we organized the hockey tournament for ten years and we did that too also trying to get rid of the alcohol part of it for all the time we were there but also to create the event for youth to

participate and today they are all still participating so it was a good thing. It's always about including others.

Okay so the last question I have when you were talking about youth needing a lot of help and you realized this when you guys went on this journey because there was youth also involved? When you looked at the youth from the beginning of the journey to the end - did you see differences that were positive?

Absolutely it was just, to me it was an acknowledgment of the fact that, like when I said we all picked up energy, knowingly or unknowingly because of the sincerity of the event for some it was positive so it created that ability to pick up good energy that the young men did pick up energy too and they needed to use it in a way that was effective for them but also for those around them. So there was respect, there was work ethics changed and acknowledgment of following instructions was a little more real. At the same time I didn't ask them, but I'm sure it changed them for life in a good way to show that you can do something and feel good about it without involving alcohol, drugs, or violence, or intimidation, or any online gaming or things like that are a total distraction. That you can actually go out there and see the real thing which is nature and the Ancestors all out there on the land. That's there to be a part of their life.

Well I don't have any other questions, is there anything else you'd like to add?

No, I'm good thanks.

Caveat Statement: Story 5 was given a pseudo name “Grandmother” to protect the identity of this storyteller who signed the consent form asking to remain anonymous. The name “Grandmother” was agreed to by the storyteller. This storyteller also understood that their story had to be altered to ensure her privacy was retained, so specific segments of their story were left out due to the uniqueness of their story. The storyteller was aware of this and agreed to any changes in their story to protect their identity.

Story 5: Grandmother’s Story

My parents and family are all from the Yukon Territory, I have lived most of my life in the Yukon and when I was growing up I spent a great deal of time on the land at our family’s trap line. I didn’t go to school until I was ten years old because we lived on the trap line and at ten years old I was sent to residential school. Where to begin? I don’t know (laughs).

I think for me to go on my healing path started when my dad passed away and before he passed away he said this town is not for you. You have to move on, you have to move someplace else. But before that I never drank alcohol until I was in my late twenties. I never tasted alcohol until then and I drank and partied a little but to me alcohol was not for me - I didn’t like the taste of it, I didn’t like the company I kept with it and everybody was going to parties here and there and that was not for me. When I was growing up at home, I spent a lot of time with my aunt and uncle and both had medical issues so I used to in my early teens go with them and help them. I would do the fishing, hunting, and anything else. I also learned a lot from my parents.

So in the early 19xx’s, after my father had died and we buried him I moved into [xxxx]. I found a place to rent and was given an opportunity to work at various jobs. A friend of mine told me about this job, it was custodial type work which I had experience in. So I went down there, filled out an application, applied for it and I was thinking well I don’t think I’m going to get it and then my friend came running over one morning a few days later and said you got an interview today, so go for that interview. I said okay. So I went there and they said you start at the school tomorrow at three o’clock. It was really fast how I got this job and I worked there for approximately two decades doing custodial work.

Then after that I moved down south on the coast for approximately two years. I stayed there then I came back here and stayed with my mother at our camp and she said, “What are you going to do now?” I said “I’m going to go back to work” and she said why don’t you just stay here, I said I will, but I need to go to work because I wasn’t working at the time. She suggested I could go to the First Nation office and they would help. I said mom I have never been on welfare in my life, I have always worked. So I went back to [xxxx] and applied for a few different jobs and I got a job at the school and I worked there for a while. I think I worked there for approximately three years. After that I transferred over to another school and worked there for another three or four years and then I transferred to my community and then I got married but he died of a serious medical condition in the mid-19xx.

So my grandkids - like my granddaughter who I raised, her kids they all came and said grandma are you going to get married again? I said “No I’ll just help raise you kids and do other things”. So that’s what I did. I teach people how to sew with a sewing machine, how to do their regalia’s

and moccasins and to me my sewing is a healing for me. If I'm depressed or mad or something I just pick up my sewing and it just calms me down and I can think and do things much better after that so that is my healing. I also do a lot of volunteer work by cooking and giving out food to people in the community. Some people say why don't you just sell it and I said I don't know it's just better this way and I teach how to do canning and other things too. I teach that with different people, especially with the young people in their twenties. So I do that too and going back to my healing I guess, it's a long hard journey but you got to be positive about what you want to do and to me like you take a look around you with all the drugs and alcohol that's in every community. I was telling my grandchildren, I said when I grew up I said there was alcohol around, but I said your great-grandma never let anybody come to our house if they were drinking and alcohol was never allowed in the home. So we were brought up without alcohol in our home and today you take a look at everything that's changed. It's so easy to get access to anything and I find that the younger people if they're not grounded any place and don't have the family support, there are a lot of young people that drink at a very young age and not just alcohol, they're into drugs as well and that is really sad.

I think where my healing really started is when I, like I lived in Whitehorse for many years and then when I moved back home I think that's where my healing really started because I had more or less done what I wanted to do. I had travelled different places and seen different things and when I did move back home, that's when I really started to take a good look at my life. Where I was, where I was going and where I wanted to be and that's the tool I use with my grandchild. I said you are here and you want to go there, what it is you have to do to get there? So it made him think and then he said well I have to do this, and this, and for him out on the land is home. His home is here because he knows what he has to do on the land. It's when he's in town that's when things happen [get in trouble] and I think it's like that with a lot of people because for me to be out here on our trap line and live off the land and do things here, this is more or less my home. I have a house in my community but that's not really my home, this is my home because I can go any place here and I know where I'm at. I'm grounded and everything.

We had to do a ceremony here not too long ago because we had bears coming into our camp and they kept coming back and we had nothing here for them. Like there was no moose meat or fish or anything, but they still came here and tried to get into the cache so after that happened I told my family, come on we're going to go do a ceremony so that's what we did. We went and we got wood and made a fire, and I said a prayer and then we got some food and we put it on a plate and we did an offering and we asked for the Ancestors to help, we asked for Creator's help and everybody around the fire said a prayer, asked for guidance and asked for protection and so far we haven't seen no sign of a bear.

So prayer is really powerful and that's what I do, we say our prayers every night but when things go wrong I always say pray to the Creator because prayer is powerful. Yep, and that's what I found, all the healing that I done with myself - I've never gone to any places where they say have to go and do this to straighten yourself out. Like a treatment centre but I've never went to any place like that. I've more or less just done it myself and once you've been drinking and you quit you find out who your friends really are and if you don't have the support from your family and that, that's really the main thing if you got your family support. I have brothers that's helped out quite a bit throughout my life they helped out because I had several children and I was in an

abusive relationship and it took me years to get away. I felt like I was committed to something and I just couldn't detach myself from him until my brother came to me and said this is not the life for you. He said you only know how much you're hurting he said but mom and dad and everybody is hurting too. So he said you need to sit down and take a good look at this situation. My youngest child was less than a year old when I left and I was living out by a lake at the time and I told my son, I said go down and see your uncle tell him to get my brother to come up here to get me. So he did and my brother came and I just packed up the kids clothes, our blankets and we left. My mom said what about all your other things? And I said no, I don't want it. I said that part of my life is over and I'm going to begin another one here, and I said I'm not going back. She [mom] was the one that always told me you got to try to work because of those kids they need a father. And the more I thought about it and I told my dad, I said I was both parents to my kids and the things that I went through with him I said I can't do it anymore. My kids come first and I said I'm not doing this anymore.

So after that I moved into town and I bought my own house after I worked for the government for a few years, I bought my own house. My ex-husband tried to come back into my life but my kids told him her life was now different and does not include him anymore. He never returned and I heard he passed away a few years back. For me that part of my life was over and I had already dealt with all this, it was the past. Like you have to deal with it and you have to bury the hatchet and then you don't look back. You just look ahead - what does the future hold for me. Where do I go from here? And you know that's how I live my life, when things happen to me and I lost family members this camp has always been a healing spot for our family. This is where we always came to gather and discuss what we were going to do and how we were going to do it and this is where we did everything. Because there are no interruptions here - no phone or television we don't have anything like that here - everything is off the land. That's why I like this place so much because it's so closely connected with everything [all our relations]. So like you take a look around you and you see it.

So it's important to be on the land for your healing?

Yes it's very important to be on the land for healing because you don't have people coming to your door, knocking on your door looking for something and interrupting what you're doing.

There's something very serene, I feel grounded.

When somebody passes away you have to put their belongings away for a year like their clothes that they wore you have to burn it and this is where we did all that. Like when my relative passed away we had to come here and burn her things and it was really, really hard on everybody? Because she was closely connected with all of our family and my one grandchild, he came up to me and said grandma look up and when I looked up I could see eagles flying around above us. My brother was there and he said those are the Ancestors he said with your grandma and that's how we look at things. He said eagles play a big part in our life and we have eagles here and they keep coming here, they come and check things out and then they leave.

But I don't know like to me I just do my own thing and I don't worry too much about other things, like I said it's my grandchildren, that's my life. I help them out as much as I can and I do

things with them and trying to guide them in the right way. Every one of my grandchildren know about surviving in the bush and all that because they been down here since they were small. I use to grab them even when they were two years old, I tell them come on we have to clean fish and now when we do get fish they always say grandma just cook, we'll do everything. You know that's very important in our culture like those grandkids. That's the same with when you're having a potlatch, if you're doing a headstone potlatch we always involved all the grandkids and make sure that they know what their protocols are, and what their job is and everything and I don't see other clans do that. Like what we do with our clan.

So would you say that a good part of your healing is spending that time with your grandchildren, and spending time teaching them and learning with you on the land?

Yes, yes.

When did you leave residential school? I was 16 when I left.

And where did you go?

I came back to my home community and I quit school in April because I just had enough and being brought up at home was different than the mission school. You had to abide by certain rules and regulations and you couldn't have anything in there. You couldn't eat certain foods from home, they took it away from you and I remember they used to get a lot of their vegetables from Alberta because a lot of people that worked in the mission school came from Alberta and they came from big farms so they would get a truck and go out and bring whole bunch of carrots, turnips, and cabbage, and things like that. And then they didn't have a root cellar so where we went to mission school it was an old building and there was a lot of crawl spaces underneath the building and that's where they stored lots of their vegetables in different parts of the building and being young kids we were nosy and wanted to know what they were doing and they said oh, none of your business you just get away. There was some friends of mine and I told them, I said they put a whole bunch of potatoes down there and they said well let's go check it out. So after everybody would take off, we'd stay behind and go check this out and found these potatoes and each dorm just about had a wood stove and they had somebody, a night watchman come around at night and he'd put wood in there to keep the place warm and we just threw those potatoes in there and cooked them (laughs). It took a long time before they caught on to what we were doing (laughs). And then your punishment if you got caught talking at the table your punishment was the wood pile and you had to go out there and pile wood or split wood or something like that. I had this really good friend, her and I used to get caught just about every second day.

I do lots of vegetables [can] and I have lots of books at home and lots of health books and there is lots of information in these books about how to look after you without taking medications. So I always pass this information on to other people depending what is going on with them, to help them with their healing.

So it sounds like part of your healing journey is looking at natural ways to help in healing?

Yes that's right. I also make up medicines for people including my family. I do not have many store-bought medications from the drug store in my home. Once I injured myself and the doctor tried to give me all kinds of medications and I was determined to make sure that what I took was what I felt I needed. I would question the doctor and ask about the medications and then I would make a decision based on what my options were. I did not just take whatever the doctor said just because he thought I needed that. So they ended up giving me some kind of painkiller and the nurse had to come and check on me every hour to see if I had pain.

Well it sounds like you're very determined; you know what you want and don't want and you've really said that. That's right.

You know what works for you and what doesn't.

Yes because that's the way my mom was. The strongest thing she ever took in her life was an aspirin. I know some people that take medication for every little thing. They got to have a pill here and a pill there and if they only know what those pills do to you. It helps you all right but it's also is no good and it can damage you in other ways. So I always tell my family be careful what you put in your mouth.

So you talked about the land being a real focal point for your healing and making sure when you go along your path that you don't spend time looking back where you've been right then that you've pretty much dealt with that in your life? Yes.

And you look and you move forward and a part of your healing is also being with your grandchildren. That's right yeah.

You teach and who you spend time with them, helping and supporting them on their healing path by teaching them. What else would you say has contributed to your healing in your life?

I don't know, like I went to lots of workshops on different things. I don't have diabetes but I do go to their workshops just to learn how to cook for people who do have diabetes. I'm one of those people that I like good home - cooked meals. I don't like unhealthy foods, like high in fat, grease, or fast foods. I don't know how to explain. To me it's interesting because you learn different ways to cook - like most of my cooking is baked, broiled or boiled and that's how they teach it at the workshop and they teach you how to eat lots of fruit and vegetables and especially greens. Our family we were always brought up on lots of vegetables, greens, and salads. That's how we were brought up like we had our own garden and we grew a lot of things fresh. We do a lot of cooking and we do cooking contracts, and you find people that never ate a salad. I don't know it just floors me.

So it sounds like cooking is very healing for you?

It is you know. I love to cook, I love to bake.

Well the cooking you were talking about, when you go to the communities and give it out. It sounds like that's your way of supporting the community?

Yes the way I look at it is a lot of them were brought up in a home and they weren't taught the cooking and the baking values and a lot has to do with the alcohol in the home and other things. They [parents] didn't have time to spend with them and teach them how to cook and everything and to me this is important if you're bringing up young people you should teach them all the values of cooking and cleaning and everything. When we do big dinners for our family when we have a lot of cooking to do we have a system for cleaning up and that's the way we teach the younger ones so they all know that. Yeah, I don't know it's hard to think back.

Well it's nothing you should feel pressured to do. You give me the information that you want to give me and that you can remember. You know you don't have to force yourself. This is not about any of that. It's about what you want to tell me and what you think is important, this is what it's about and all of the things you've said so far has been important because you've talked a lot about your family and clearly family is a huge part of our culture.

Yes that's right.

And you know children are the focal point and the woman I talked to you about, Kim Anderson she talks about children; she says children are a gift from the Creator.

It is you know. That's the way I look at it too, it's a gift from Creator. I know we have one person in our community, I think she has several kids now. The first one she was okay, but the others she did drugs and she drank and we had a lot of meetings with her and even with welfare. I don't know, just the way she was brought up and I know this last one she did hard drugs with the baby. I told her, you're not only harming yourself you're really harming that baby. I said you take a look around you, with all these young ones, I said young people some of them are in school and some of them are late teenagers [developmentally delayed due to drugs/alcohol]. I said why do you think they are the way they are? I said because their mother did drugs with them when she was carrying them. I said you got to always think about the baby because whatever goes in your mouth I said that baby takes too. And she was just crying and everything and she said my parents don't tell me anything about this. She's like closely connected with my family member and they grew up together. This same family member had a friend once who got very upset and she advised her to slow down, think about this first, don't get upset so fast - decide what you could have done differently. When something happens you have to stop, think about how you want to react so you do not say something you cannot take back.

She sounds like she has a very determined, focused person and the advice that she gave her friend to not get so upset, to think about things, and how she could have done things differently. It sounds like words she probably got from you?

Yeah me and other family because that's what we do when we have a family meeting and everybody says this is what is happening and especially if someone is hurting, like if somebody is having a hard time in their life. We all pull together and try to work things out. The biggest part for me and the hardest part is to stay focused by not giving advice or negative feedback.

So to remain positive and keep optimistic and not criticize or point fingers at someone else and say well this is not good for you.

Yes I always just tell them to be safe? Look after yourselves.

Well it sounds like a very respectful way that you're doing that.

Yes it is and we did that a long time ago, our family.

That's a very important thing to do, I think.

It is you know.

Yes to have that connection with your family and to know that you can all come together and talk about issues.

We get together on a regular basis and we all take on responsibilities for this gathering. And no matter what is going on, I always look for the positive in things and not the negative. I know all my family know this. I find if you have family and have that connection and you get together and make the time that a lot of healing goes on there too and to me that's very important to have your family and the connection.

So the gatherings that you've had with your family - what would you say were the healing aspects of it - for you and for your family?

Hmm. I don't know. I know some of the family members like drinking and things and then you take a look at it today and like they hardly ever touch the alcohol now and I think with family being there to support them and help them - you know to get them away from it.

So it would be like leading by example because not so much saying you should stop drinking, but more just having them there and accepting them where they are at in that moment but just also showing them that you can have a good time, and you can have fun and you don't need the alcohol to do that.

Yeah, that's right. You don't because you stop and think about years ago and I know my parents and all of them they used to have meetings and they'd come home and say oh we're going to have a meeting over at a relative's place. A bunch of us are going to meet there and I want you and your sibling to make some food and bring it over to us and I said ok. We didn't ask what the meeting was about or anything but I know a lot of different ones with different clans and we'd meet at a certain house. So I knew from way back then - like even when we were on the trap line my dad and all his brothers they used to come to our place and we used to have a big circle and have a meeting. And its things like that and the upbringing that we had, all the things that my dad and mom used to do.

I remember in the springtime when the dandelions first came out. He [dad] used to tell us go pick dandelion leaves because the flowers had just started then. So we picked all these leaves and

he'd wash them and dry them out and then he would cook them up and then he'd tell us eat it and he'd say eat, it's good! And he said I'm going to cook some more. So he'd cook more for himself and mom and all them, but it tasted almost like – spinach. He'd say that stuff there is good for you in the springtime when they first come out he said it's a green that's good for your body and then he told us it has lots of vitamins and iron. Some people look down at First Nations when they eat fish head and I was talking to my mom and my aunts about that and they said if you read up on history and know what's in fish head that would change everything for them. That fish head is full of calcium. I have family that would take fish head over a steak (laughs).

Yeah, I think I would too actually. So it sounds like from what you're telling me that before you reached the age of ten, the time you spent at home was really the basis for how you live your life? How you heal yourself, take care of yourself and focus on the future by learning from your past and moving forward. It sounds like you got a good grounding in those first ten years.

I did because we didn't go to school and everybody like the government was hounding my parents to get us into school and I told my family years later. I said why did they take us away? Why did they put us in the mission school? I said we had family that was teaching us about reading and numbers at home. So before we went to school we learned I said that was our math and I said if they just left us where we were I'm sure we would have survived really good. I remembered and I don't know how old I was when the government and police came to the house to take us. It was in the middle of winter and when they came in and said we're here to get your kids. She said you're not taking my kids and they said your kids have to be in school and she said says who? She said they are living a good life here and I'm teaching them and other family is teaching them. That's when my dad told them you find me a good school and I'll put them in there but he said not now and they said there's that residential school. He brought his oldest child out and he said you see my child here? My child is sixteen years old and when I took my child out of that school he was less than one hundred pounds and he said the school has to be approved by me. If I know it's good then I will send them but I'm not sending my kids to a residential school. So then he met with the supervisor at the mission school in [xxxx] and that's how we ended up there.

So that explains why you went at the age of ten and they held off until they found a place your parents agreed to.

Yes. I think it would have turned out to be not so bad of a school if the supervisor had lived but he died. He was a really caring person and he was in charge of the whole school. He'd go in the summer for holidays, instead of going back to wherever he came from around Alberta. He would go to the communities or wherever. He'd go visit all the communities and see how people were doing and how they lived and he used to pick up First Nation people and he used to go hunting with them so they'd have moose meat for their children. He was very down to earth, a really good guy but then his nephew took over and everything went to his head. I remember one time my friend and I got sent there for fooling around at the breakfast table and this guy he said hold out your hand and he strapped us with a fan belt from off a car and my dad came in the very next day and my hand was just swelled up and same with my girlfriend. He went in the office and he grabbed that belt and he hit that guy with it. He said if I ever come back here and find my

daughter like that he said I am going to take you to court. So they had to sort of just watch what they were doing around us after that. There were a lot of good things that happened too they taught us sewing and craftworks and same with the kitchen. We got to go in the kitchen and help with the cooking. But the majority of it was just, like I told my friend it's not like home. But then there were kids in that school that never left there. They just stayed there year round and those kids, those ones I told her I said I can't understand how come and we asked the supervisor one day - how come those kids don't go home? And they said they don't have a home to go, their parents are dead. I just couldn't understand it - sad.

So you got to go home in the summers?

Uh hmm. Once in a while we came for Christmas if our parents were in. Like my dad worked in the summer but in the winter he was up on the trap line.

Well it's good that you got to go home.

Yeah, but I stayed right up until I was fifteen I think every summer I came out I got sent to the lake with family (laughs). Like it was good I learned a lot because my auntie taught me lots.

So she taught you a lot of the traditional ways of your life and there's a lot of students that went to mission school and never had that when they went home.

Yes and she's the one who taught me when you first start your menstruation and she taught me everything and when my girls were in their teens my mom is the one that taught them. And that's what I was trying to do within our community is to get young girls that's already in their menstruation or just starting to train them up to what their protocols are and how to look after themselves and do it here. But I never got anywhere with them.

I have this friend she has a little girl and I had her here. She's was like a little old lady in a young person's body. She's a real nice little girl. I told her mom I said when it comes time for her; I want her here so we can work with her and train her. And her mom said okay, she has older sisters but they don't know anything about traditional stuff.

Yeah I think a lot of our people have lost that as a result of residential school and the interference of Europeans coming in and it was never passed on to their kids. It's really, really good that your family was able to hold on to that.

Yes that's right. It was lots of sneaking around with the potlatches and things like that. They tried to stop all the potlatches and everything.

Yes what I've learned and what I've looked at recently in the research and other people from across Canada, other Aboriginal scholars talk about history and the same thing across Canada it went underground. They hid it and they held on to it and a lot of the people in the south, they won't talk about their traditional healing, or they won't give details, or they won't give certain things that are very spiritual because they feel that's the one thing they managed to hold on to and did not lose.

That's right yeah.

That wasn't changed, so to keep holding on to that and keeping it close to our culture they won't share it with outsiders and sometimes they won't share it with other people that are a part of their culture too, because it's personal right. There were things that I was told you don't share with other people - that are spiritual and personal to me. So there are certain things that I just hold on to and keep to myself.

But growing up on a trap line you know, we did not know anything about prejudice until we hit the mission school I just couldn't believe it.

Story 6: Norman's Story

Good afternoon my name is Norman Jack originally from [xxxx], BC. I am Kaska and Tahltan ancestry. My dad is Tahltan and my mother is Kaska First Nation, yeah I'm a "Kastahl"! If I was taller I would be a "Tahlkas"! Yeah when I was born my mother had to go from [xxxx] to [xxxx]. I was born there and I went back to [xxxx] at three months old and I lived a traditional life with my parents in [xxxx]. They trapped every year and we'd go out in the bush and we'd stay out all winter, most of the winter and go into town and make the trip in with the dog team until I was about six years old I guess. I started school a little late so when I was seven years old. Mostly we lived in the bush with my mom and dad trapping. Anyways, we even went to [xxxx] when I was a young fella before I was six years old. My mom and dad worked at the cannery there at [xxxx] so I was out in the city life of it. I remember going to a show and a movie and crossing the railroad tracks and that's it and going to movies. Well I don't remember the movies but I guess we moved back to [xxxx] and that's when I went. I went to the movies in [xxxx], I don't remember to watch the movies too much but I remember the popcorn and cream soda pop. (Laughs) Yeah my mom and dad were working in the cannery there and we moved back to [xxxx] the fall of 19xx. They took us to [xxxx] and we went from [xxxx] on the boat. We didn't know I was going to the residential school in 19xx7.

Okay yeah, well that's how I ended up at the residential school they took us from [xxxx] to [xxxx], and from [xxxx] we caught the boat from the [xxxx] the priest picked us up at [xxxx]. The bus took us to [xxxx], there's a road as far as the road to [xxxx] was. That's how far it was and they drove us down with a truck, in the back of a big truck like an open box truck all the way - kids sitting in the back. I don't know if they had a canvas on the top of it, like an army truck or whatever or if it was open, I can't remember. Anyways we all came back and they picked us up and we drove to [xxxx] and ended up in the residential school. I didn't know I was going to stay there or not. Yes it was quite a change for me. They cut all our hair off and all this, it was pretty sad it was like being kidnapped I guess it would be. All of a sudden your parents were gone and you're wondering if you're going back home so it was. Anyways that's how I ended up at residential school in 19xx in the fall.

I was there for 19xx, 19xx, and 19xx. I thought I was there for 19xx but they don't have a record of it - 19xx until the spring or summer. Okay anyways about 19xx/xx I thought I went there but they didn't have a record of xx. They always lose records or they couldn't find. Anyways when I got out of school I went to elementary school for a couple years, two or three years until 19xx then we moved to [xxxx]. Yeah, but I started into alcohol when I was pretty young, fifteen started drinking heavy. Started working and then got into knowing people and partying more and what a way to face or communicate. I was hiding, hiding the shame of residential school. We didn't know at the time but my mother we were ashamed to see them around in the town when they were drinking. I don't know if it's every young people but it's just you didn't want to say it's your mother or dad, that's part of the residential school, you think? We thought we were you know more white [people] instead of First Nations. That's what happens. From there, I was always getting into trouble with authority, because authority from the school and that means the police and I was, I didn't like authority, police like the supervisors [in residential school] and I got in trouble quite a bit when - drinking, whenever I got, I was quite shy and I just had to have a drink just to communicate more and open up, otherwise you wouldn't say a word. Anyways

that's where I was, stayed in [xxxx] up until 19xx and moved to [xxxx] and that's where I met my wife and we started, we lived together since and she went to residential school and she remembered me there. I guess she'll tell you a few stories, I was in there at the same time, anyways and so we lived together since 19xx. What is it, thirty-six years just about? Anyways she went to the residential school and we never talked about the residential school too much until 19xx or sometime around there. 19xx I heard this group was going to court over at the residential school for the supervisor taking him to court and I thought about it and I thought oh yes, I want to, I met this worker.

Anyway she was working with the people with the trailblazers they first took the guy to court for the residential school and that got me encouraged, like it got me to [thinking] yeah. Encouraged me to get up there and do the same because it was very difficult what he had to take on before he passed on because he was sick or something and I thought you had to be there to take somebody to court, they had to be alive so I got busy and filed a complaint with the worker. Anyways and that's how it started in 19xx. Start going to the group and it was all twelve or fourteen of us maybe in the group and we all went as a group for the residential school courts and that's how we all got to take it to court in Whitehorse and we dealt with it. That was a big step forward for my healing, after I brought that out with the group. The group was support and that was a big help with our group so it be more difficult if it was an individual. It would be quite a bit harder but with the support people and there was more than one and telling the truth about what's happening and you don't have to prove it in court but anyways we did. We did the settlement and looking back twenty/twenty a lot of people if they knew. Looking back we always say we could have done a little more for myself and our people to get compensated more like you know what I mean. You see these people in the news, like over in a different country coming over here to Canada and they went back and got punished in their country and they get tortured and punished and they get ten million bucks for a year or something. I'm like holy man we got tortured more than that at that school for four years or five years and that brings up, how can they get ten million bucks and we just get tortured as kids and we get a little settlement for, maybe lucky if somebody got \$200,000 or whatever, not even \$100,000 some people. So that kind of when I see something like that, that triggers what we went through and so I don't know, the government could even keep that open, like they still could dig. I'm sure there's a way to compensate the people that's still alive but once there's some way for lost language they don't compensation for them, start their own school or start their own language school like even if one person could do.

That's the biggest, if I had a good teaching on how to get my language back, that's the most important to identify our people like we identify by language. Well we've got our culture but we don't have our language. We know some words like Mussi Cho but a few swear words - that's the first ones we learn I guess and just teasing words. I don't know but to just make out what somebody is saying, what they're talking about maybe. I still can learn I guess. Just get somebody to kick me in the glaaah (laughs) that's how you learn. Tell me, teach me her [wife's] language, yeah that the biggest loss - the language. It's the first thing they took away from us is, we can't speak our language in the residential school. They would wash our mouth with soap if they hear you because a lot of Kaska's talk the same language as Tahltan, just a little different dialects, faster. Kaska's speak a little faster, Tahltan is slower but it's all, most of it's the same you can understand. All the animals are the same, like the names of the animals, and the people Dene, but if it wasn't for all of the abuse in the residential school it could have been and without

taking the language away, all the sexual abuse, and physical, it could have been a really, it could have been a better place. You learn English and you could keep your language at the same time. That could have been something else. It could have been a name; we wouldn't have to go through this healing journey because we met people from.

I met people the only good thing is I met people up [xxxx], all the way up and how could I have ever known about it if I didn't go to that school but that's the only good thing I know I met them in school. They were from a different country, [xxxx] all over there north towards [xxxx], even up as far as [xxxx], I guess would be that's where they come from or [xxxx]. From [xxxx] I met all the family members of one family. A couple of them ran away, I don't know how far they made it, or if they made it back to [xxxx] or not but they ran away from residential school. Yeah it was a jail for young kids, or a reform school, when I look back on it now it was probably worse than probably city jail. Jails now or penitentiaries, it's for kids? Yeah, it was just set up for people to go and do wrong you know. They tell you you're a dirty Indian and that you're never going to be nothing but then it motivated some people. Myself, I always wanted to prove people wrong you know. Some people it worked – you proved them wrong so that could be a motivator. Like I was watching this movie about our people and the soldiers in the states - I told him; using psychology on him like if he tells me the truth he'll be alive. Like they would go down and what do you think he should do? If he says opposite, he'll do the opposite way, if he says. So that's how the healing journey can work there. You do the opposite and they don't know, or encourage you to do better I guess but they don't realize in those days but, anyways.

The healing, the real healing I guess for me is I feel at home in the bush. Especially now in the fall I can go out and go to the mountains and just go hunt and camp. Just get to the mountains. It's so nice, and you're free and it's like open church for me. Like it's a big temple on a mountain or in the bush it's like a temple, it's a Creation. For the longest time I turned away from the churches like from residential school. A lot of us did I think, for myself I never went to church, just maybe Christmas and Easter. Just, then they teach us in school how God punishes you but God going to punish you. They teach you that God's going to punish you, you know and that's wrong. You don't, it's just a bad way that turned us away. Like we always believed, my family we always believed in a Creator like the "Denetiauh" we call it, Great Spirit "Denetiauh" yeah it's. "D-e-n-e-t-i-a-u-h" yeah "Denetiauh" and that's the way we always believed in this. Very similar, my dad was always saying forgive them, forgive them, they don't know what they're talking about. They don't know what they're saying, I looked in the bible. That's what the good Lord said forgive them, they don't know what they say. Yeah it's just. We had our own beliefs, the Creator. The Creator created everything, respect for this land. Respect everything, every little thing. Bugs and everything's for a purpose. We learned that but we learned in the bush. As you get little older you think oh yeah that's right, we shouldn't kill those little bugs or nothing or step on them. My parents were right they're here for a reason. Everything's here for a reason. It's made to be a part of this world here and everything has its purpose, everything and that's the healing all right. It's up there and just once you start believing that everything's alive, everything in this creation is alive. The trees even the rocks, grandfather rocks. You know that's why when we use rocks we use ones that's been burnt already or come from, use it for purposes healing. That is we use the grandfather rocks we call it this way because they've been used burnt already, everything's alive and that's what keeps me going. I wish we would all go back to the bush life and get the young people back on the land. We just teach them the basics and they learn

on their own. That's how you learn in the bush. There's always something to do in the bush you know, you never can say oh you're bored. There's something always something to do. You can make anything out of nothing, out of the trees, the dried trees or whatever. There's always something to do if you just think about it and the young people nowadays, even right now you know like I see them on television in the International sporting event every four years, if we had the chance they had now we would be right in there.

I know myself I was in sports or whatever. I could have gone to the art school from the public school at residential school after I got out of the mission school. The teacher wanted to take me down to [xxxx] to finish art down there in 19xx or 19xx but I didn't I was just shy. Thinking about the dorms, you got to be with other guys, white, or non-First Nations people and prejudice. You learn prejudice from the supervisors and nuns they're prejudice and you think everybody's like that so that kept me out, kept me from going to art school, going into the dorms down there. So instead I went to [xxxx] and worked doing labour. Loading the big freight boxcars lumber from the sawmill for my dad, but whatever's meant after you, you're on your own I always believe that whatever's meant [to be], if things don't go your way, it's the good Lords way, Creator's way. Like that's the path you're going to, if it goes your way it's the good Lords way now I know and that's the way I went to [xxxx] with my dad like I said and I'm still here yet.

I drank pretty heavy. I tried to use alcohol to drown everything. Even tried to drink myself to death I guess. That's the only way we learned to deal with grief, I did. Losing my mom, my dad, my brother, my niece up there by the top, the rocks in a fire, my dad the next day died, passed away. Yeah, so that was the only way I would deal with it is just alcohol drinking. Try to drink myself to death but I guess this way, if you try to drink yourself but it's pretty hard to do that because you get a hangover and then you're scared to death so you can't win with alcohol. The best way is to cut it out cold turkey and go through it, you pull through it. Yeah, I quit in 19xx I think it was. My brother was still alive, he passed away in 19xx but anyways, I just quit cold turkey. I couldn't even drink water for five days. Just shaking and I felt my whole heartbeat through my body and couldn't even drink water, finally started drinking water after five days and slowly getting my balance back. I quit and went to the circus. They had a little circus there in the fall or spring or probably summer or fall or whatever went on the rides, the salt and pepper ride, test my nerves (laughs). I was still alive so I quit drinking and came to [xxxx] bought an old truck, a Ford truck and I met my wife in 19xx November we started living together and she went to the residential school but we never talked about it, I mentioned that.

Anyways finally in 19xx after the court settlement we started opening up more and I mentioned that the worker, she was somebody I could talk to, the lawyers and it was really tough to bring out and tell, exactly what you have to bring out to the lawyers and it was very, it's very tough but the people that had not gone through it to. I'd recommend them to do it, like don't take it to the grave like a lot of our people. You know the good Lord says there's nothing in this world that we can't bear so just keep that in mind, bring it out and share it. You can tell the people, they know already. There are a lot of people that went through that, they know what I'm talking about. There are a lot of people that know exactly what I'm talking about. There's nothing to hide. It happened. We have to let the non-First Nations know, let them know, like educate them. They have to educate the people to get that prejudice out of this, it's still going on today you have to get it out, say why, there's people who don't work and alcohol? That's the reason, open your

eyes now and listen to me. Listen to our people. We don't talk for nothing. We don't hunt our game, or carry our gun for nothing. It's for food and stuff. Even if they see you carry a rifle and they hear somebody else shoot, what you shoot they're still going to ask you what you shooting at? And I just tell them, I don't fire my rifle for nothing unless I'm lost or I'm hungry and I want to eat something and things like that.

Trust when you need it. Bring it and educate, we have to educate the Caucasian I guess you could call it. See exactly where we came from, what happened, why we were prejudiced too because of the white supervisors and nuns telling us we were dumb and that we would never be anything. You're going to be like your mother, just dumb, dumb Indians or something but even now we have to educate people on how to say there's no Indians, it's First Nations. Even in the news broadcast you'll see that sometimes they'll say "Indians" but now somebody mentioned it to them because they don't say Indians no more, they say First Nations. If they know they're insulting us they'll say Indians because I just heard a comment down there this guy I'm Indian, I'm probably more Indian than you guys. He said I'm just a dumb Indian. I told him you must be a dumb Indian because there's only First Nations around here. You know we have to educate them. I know it's going to be hard for them to say First Nation's because they don't want you to be, they don't want you to say oh you were here first. But we were here first, we were always here!

The Creator, they can go into theory and theory is theory. How the hell you going to know how many millions of years are? Who's going to believe us if we said we were here million years? You know, they won't believe us if we said that too and why should we believe what they say if they say there's a rock or you know millions of years old how we going to. They wouldn't believe us if we told them we were here a million of years (laughs) but we were here first and we've always been here. That's my feeling, I can feel it in my bones and I've been here forever you know. We survived, we made it this far and I'm glad we lived through this, that residential school and we can live through just anything I think. But it took me a long time to forgive, to forgive people like what happened in the school but that's the only way you can move on. You have to forgive even if you say, you forgive yourself. Forgive yourself or ask for forgiveness or being prejudiced but it's not your fault. You just ask. You know we were all prejudiced because they made us that way that's how we were. The white people were running the school and they made us prejudiced but then we get older and you know there's good and bad in everybody. There are good people and there are bad people and all are even and we have to. That's the way it is, if we're all perfect can't be, everything's got a little fault, a little trick, everyone's human. If it was a perfect world I don't know what we would be. You're looking for faults.

Maybe it is but we just create it, the bad part but I guess there's, what you call those people we pray for those people mentally or physically - yeah physically and mentally handicapped, we pray for those people. My dad taught me to never make fun of those people you always pray for them, pray for them he said they don't know what they're doing. It's like prejudiced people he says pray for those people, they don't know what they say and then it finally hit me and I was like holy I know what you are talking about. Pray for those people they don't know what they're talking about, or telling you. Calling your own people down like no good but I guess they're bringing it on their own self those people that do, it's karma. If they treat or make fun of the black bear or something, it always, it's calling for your own destiny - karma. You're creating

your own destiny. So that's something to know about, do not blame it on somebody put a spell or witchcraft (laughs) you did it yourself. You made fun of that bear and now it's, somethings going happen, he's got you. You did that not him, that's the karma we're talking about. Yeah that's my healing. I wish you the best I hope this information helps you. If there's any questions you had or any ideas, if you have questions I'm a little bit older telling you this story, telling you my healing journey and if there's something that you don't understand or want to know you can ask me too because I'm just me.

And so how old are you now? Sixty-six.

You talked about the land and you called it your temple and is that what you would call for yourself healing? The land was healing for you?

Yeah, yeah you just feel open and you can feel the spirit around you. Especially if you go in the mountain you can feel the breeze you can just feel the good, like just a Great Spirit right in you and you always, I don't care where you are, and it always feels like somebody's watching or like someone's watching. It's always you can go anywhere about and it's just feels like somebody around you. It's our Ancestor and it's the Great Spirit. That's who you think about, our Ancestors been here, it don't look like but they been here, somebody been exactly where you were at one time you just feel like you've been the first one there but still we been here forever, our people. It's a temple and you can pray, just pray. Pray just true prayer or whatever you want to say. You can talk out loud, some people just might be afraid if somebody might hear them just talking to yourself but now it's more they understand more nowadays and it's a temple and you look at the Creation. Little hands, you know they say little hands he's there for a reason. He's a part of this world he's part of the good Lord made everything. He created everything so perfect. How can you make something so perfect, it's got to be somebody that created it can't just fall out of the stars and start out (laughs)? Can't just fall out of the rock. Science, scientists finally open their eyes and they convert, they can't prove anything - oh got to be somebody stronger than us makes this no? Finally oh that's it, no more? I can't study any more, I can't figure that out. They call it dark matter; they call God, the scientists all gone now. Atheists just have to prove and then they see the light and that's it. Okay you win (laughs) yeah.

Okay you mentioned that you said people need to talk. Can you clarify that a bit more? Are you saying they should talk about their experiences or what should they be talking about?

Well they should talk about, yeah they have to talk or bring out even how hard it is they have to talk about, share what their [residential school] experience. They have to talk to one person or somebody that's working with the lawyer or somebody that's got to be confidential, it's hard to talk to anybody 'cause you don't trust nobody and when somebody drinking or something. Some people might bring it out when they're drinking then they're "so oh did I say that" but it's better to talk about it and when they get in an argument when the person might get drunk that you told to and make it worse so you got to be careful of that. So it's always good to be careful who you tell if they never drank all their life or they're not going to get drunk and you get into a fight and argue and they can bring it up and hurt you more when you're fighting and that's the way it goes.

So in talking about people talking about their experiences in residential school is that something you feel what you did for your own healing as well? Was to start talking?

Yeah that's the biggest, hardest hurdle to start the healing like it takes courage, the courage it took me to the perpetrator or whatever you call, the one that did that was on his death bed and I had, I thought we had to take him to court before he died so that's what spurred me on more, yeah.

So you mentioned about forgiveness and you talked about forgiveness, forgiveness of the people at the residential schools as well as forgiveness for yourself and the things you feel you may have done. Is that also part of your healing?

Yes that's a big. That's one of the hardest to forgive the people that abused you physically or whatever, you know yourself you got to ask for that's the one thing that I always think about. You forgive before you're gone or ask forgiveness before they're gone or something, before they pass on. You don't want to, I don't know sometimes you think about it and you know you see, you go to a lot of services and you think about the eulogies and you know you ask for. You know you don't want to put it in your eulogy after you're gone because you ask for forgiveness and I guess you could, but it's better to have them when they're still alive, and you're still here. Ask for forgiveness and you can accept it or ignore it or not. It's as long as you know in your heart you know that.

So what keeps you on your healing path? How do you stay there and keep going?

Oh well I'm getting up there in age now but I get up every day and thank the Creator for just keeping me healthy and there's something that I have to pass on in my way. I have to do something yet I guess. I have to write one song or something, or teach one person this. It could be my great nephew, whatever or something. I have to teach them yet or show them while I'm still here. I have to, so that's what is in my healing. Like with my music if I play music, if I teach one person how to encourage them and they come up to me and say oh yeah I listened to you back there and that's what made me play the guitar and I practice every day or something like that. Something you said in one song, it could be one word in a song, and they got it. Music, yeah definitely, got to get back into music again and just that's what I like best and to keep playing. Keep picking and a grinnin (laughs).

Oh yes I get a lot of healing from my music and if I get an energy, if I got any energy to share, I share it with people and sing out from the heart, and it comes back. How many people out there and just the one and how many comes back? That's the energy you get and the music band and I. I will use them for example my cousin's music band, when I'm down sometimes, down just really low energy I don't feel like doing nothing, I go and see them at the bar or sing a few songs and they know when I'm feeling down or something, they sense it or whatever and they be singing, doing a whole set and it's just like re-doing my energy. Just like the last time they were down here the past weekend. They let me sing five songs and it just filled my energy back up so I told them, I explained to them I said I didn't like to get too close to anybody like after I lost my brother and music and I didn't like getting too close to anybody but you're my brother so okay. He said oh well you are my brother he's the one that put me under his wing and taught me, and

encouraged me how to play guitar and that's what I want to hear. He's my first cousin, second cousin but he calls me his brother. He's my second cousin and my brother he was a great guitar player so he said he took him under his wing when he played guitar you know and taught him a bit so that's what lift me up there. My brother he was so close me and we played music together in 19xx or 19xx and after that. Not as much but we played. He went to that world exposition on transportation and communication in 19xx and they ended up playing there. He did his part.

So is there anything else you would say keeps you on your healing path? You mentioned you thank Creator every day and then also that there was a purpose you still had in this life, like some teachings you had to do. So you had talked about your healing and what keeps you on your healing path and you talked about being thankful to Creator every day for being here and having your health. And you talked a bit about there's more for you to do here and some teaching for you to do and then music is a huge part of your healing and when you feel down you turn to your music to help lift you up. So I'm just wondering is there anything else you would like to add to that in terms of what keeps you on your healing path?

Okay yeah well I can't forget my wife she's a big part of the healing because we both went through that school but I went to the hard part of the boy's side. I know she knows the physical abuse in there too but she understands she knows. We never talk about – you know what I mean? What they call it? Direct? You know like details but she heard about the stories so she can draw a big picture without, you know what I mean? We always picture things like I wish the leader of this country would picture things. See the whole picture and I had a question does everybody have photographic memories or? Like when I talk about, say I saw my mom - I can see her right now. Or my dad - everybody can do that?

Umm I don't know if everybody can do that, I think it varies. With people you just have to ask people. Some people do have a photogenic memory they can remember things like details, some people just have a memory of a photo in their mind and no details. I think it varies with people because we're all different and then some people learn better if they read information as opposed to just see it. Some people like to read information, they like to do it as well, say if they were learning something new like play the guitar. I could sit and watch you play the guitar but it would also be good for me to actually play it to learn as well, and to listen and to pay attention to notes on a music page or that kind of thing. I think it varies with people. I think some people like to experience, they want to do it, they want to watch it, they want to ask questions, they may want to read about it and they pick it up that way and they may carry things in their mind but I think it varies for people with photographic memory because for some people their photographic memory is really good. They could look at that information and they'll know word for word. Other people may just pick out and they get the idea of what it's about.

So what would it be if you have a photographic picture of someone's face you talk about them and you can see them right there?

That is photographic memory is just varies with some people.

Yeah I just think about somebody, maybe my uncle or my dad and I can see them right. You know right there, right now.

Ok so is there anything else that you would like to add regarding your healing?

Maybe write a song about this, that I keep, maybe write a song. I wrote a poem. If you go to that residential school services organization, the poem I wrote, it's called "Someone Who Cares". I think it said "Someone Who Cares" or just "Cares" "Who Cares" yeah, get that one. It has my name on it, I'm pretty sure.

Is there anything else?

I would just like to thank you Maisie Smith for your cooperation, your involvement with our healing. Like I mentioned before I'm always thinking about I hope somebody would do this so we can put it in our history books for everybody to read like for everybody like the Caucasian people and see where we come from and see where we got prejudice from. The white, I say the white people or Caucasian running the residential schools and what results of this and wonder why we were prejudice a little bit but they should educate the Caucasian about that. What's your thesis supervisor? Alanise Goodwill. Oh yeah thanks for keeping up the good work. I see a progress in your representing and questioning and all that. It takes a lot to memory and I congratulate you on that - I'm sure it's a healing journey for you too. Yes and everything I talk about it comes true, why don't we have someone doing this job like you're doing, and here you are. So I'm going to have to think of some more things (laughs) and it's there. Somebody's going to come and do this so yeah congratulation on your success. Yes. We need more people like you for the younger generation you hear me? (Laughs) God Bless. Thank you.

Story 7: Alice's Story

My name is Alice Donnelly I'm a Kaska woman and I lived in Yukon all my life. I was born in [xxxx] in December month, a really cold month.

I've got five children. Actually four but I raised one as my son because of circumstances that my sister passed away and I raised him in my culture with mom and that's helped because they were always there for us. My mom and dad arranged marriage for us, for me when I was out of school because I didn't want to go back [residential school] because of things that happened so mom, dad, my grandfather, his parents, and my parents arranged marriage. It's not this one, it's a relationship before that I had my children and I stayed in that relationship for ten years. I had my children and because it was a relationship that included alcohol and getting beat up all the time so I just had enough and I just took my kids and I walked out and left everything behind. I just took a few blankets and clothes that we needed and I just walk away.

Then I started. After that relationship I just went on a drunk for four years and then I realized what I was doing to myself. Everything he said to me I took it as what he really meant. He thought I was stupid, I didn't know how to work, I didn't know how to do, how to sew or anything but before that mom taught me how to sew moccasins and sew other things. I did pretty good in my later years. After that relationship I thought to myself what am I doing to myself and my kids? That I drank, so I just quit in 19xx. That's the time I decided not to drink anymore. I looked at my life and it wasn't good. So I just started from there. I had a rough time but it wasn't as if I couldn't do anything. I realized that I could do things on my own, the way I thought. So after September came around, mom and my sisters and I decided to go to school so we went to school downtown, adult class and we did that all winter and they gave us a certificate to say we participated and we finished our program. So after that, in 19xx, all summer I stayed home and worked with mom. She taught us how to do our work and everything and dad too was always there for us. He taught my children how to hunt and how to live in the bush and then in 19xx I thought I gotta do something else.

So I joined an Indian women's group in [xxxx]. I don't know why, I just went up there and took part in their programs and that's how I started to find out what all we could do? And they really taught me a lot those Native women's group and they put on workshops and what all we can do in the community they ask us and we started doing healing through them and they had workshops and everything so I participated even though I was shy. I couldn't talk one on one to anybody. All I did was say yes and no. Like when we were in residential school we were not allowed to answer or speak up for yourself and we can't speak up for another person for what they do to them because what they do in residential school is little grade 1's because they couldn't speak English good or if they wet their bed or anything they would just beat them up, the sisters [nuns]. They're mean and I wonder how come they are, they talk about God and all that and still they, mean. And here the little kids, I talked to one of my friends she come to stay with me for two weeks one time, she's passed away now but she was one of the little kids that got beat up. They just punched them on their head or their back and my friend here, her back was like that and she'd say gee when you talk about [being hit] my back hurts, you know why? Because you're one of them that the sisters [nuns] beat you up, punch you up. They never spanked, they just punched, really punched like that, right on their head or their back and they

[kids] can't talk back, they can't say ouch it hurts or anything and us we stand up in that line. We're all in that line like that, grade 1, 2, 3 and 4 and all around like that. Small little room and I went back down to the residential school that one time and I looked in that playroom, it's just a small little building, small little place and it looked really big to me because we come from small little house and here, I don't know how seventy-five kids could fit in a little room and she'd say oh my back hurts and I would say that's why your back hurts and she'd say she didn't know why it hurt all the time so I told her and she just got really, really I don't know how you would say? Agitated? And I would tell her you got to talk about stuff like that so you start healing I told her and she was with me for two weeks and her whole hand was just raw. And I would ask her what happened? And she would say it's just from stress. So what I did was I told her to wash her hand and I put ointment on it then I spray those puffy, puff balls of mushroom dried and I put it all on there and wrap it up and she stayed with me for two weeks and by that time it was all healed because I would talk with her every day and I go to work at the same time. Go to work and she would cook for me and everything (laughs) she stayed with me for two weeks and that's how it healed. She'd say it's all from stress and I told her how to use things like that so it would heal up and she was just really happy about it. Oh I didn't know it could be like that she says.

Even my little brother he was hit, you know how kids play and they bike around. They don't know how to put the brakes on and one of the neighbors he was working on his bike and that other kid came with his bike and he hit his hand on the steps and all the skin peeled off so I put ointment on it and here at the same time too I got that was in 19xx or 19xx I think. Oh yeah before that in 19xx I went to school for five months for a clerk's typist course in [xxxx] in that vocational school. So it was right by the river and I wasn't here for five months and I know I missed my kids but I had to take that training and then after five months I came back and my kids were just happy, especially my youngest girl and then after that I took - well I always did talk to kids about using alcohol and drugs and I don't know as they were growing up they just participated in drinking I guess but I always talk with them.

In 19xx I started, one of the social workers she worked for the band, the local First Nation. You want to work for the government as alcohol worker? I told them gee I don't know anything about alcohol. She said just go by your experience and what you went through. That way you could talk to people. So I thought about it and I said gee what about my kids? I always leave them behind when I used to be drinking. Now I'm going to be away, well you can get a good babysitter they told me. I said okay. There were two of us, one girl from [xxxx]. She started on her healing then too so by that time I was sober for a couple of years so I started training in alcohol and drugs and worked for six years with the government doing that work and during that time there was quite a bit of people sobered up. They told me even if one person sobered up that's good. But then there were some Elders and some older guys my age or so they started quitting so that was really good and then my band office too they needed a social worker in there so with my training and all that I switched jobs from government to my First Nation. I started there in 19xx I think in April and I worked.

Oh yeah, I trained on the job and my relative was my employer. She's the teacher in how I work with people, I told somebody right in front of everybody things and my relative would say come on in, come into my office so I went to her and she said when you confront somebody like that make sure you take them in the office and explain to them, not in front of everybody. I said okay,

that's how I started. But she taught me a lot, in how to deal with people in front of people so anyways that's how I started. So I worked with them for a whole year she was my, she had to write down what I had to do and she had to give all my reports to the federal government they used to have some kind of program. Like it paid from them too so that's how I started with my First Nation. So after one year I worked with them. Then I went for trainings you know little things and yeah I worked with them right until 19xx and then in 19xx because they had election, which we never, ever had I didn't want to work for them so I took time off, four year.

During 19xx I think we all go to school together (laughs). It was my relative and your relative and your relative she would take higher than us, but us we took 8-11 I think and we had to finish that course in four months and from September to December, holy man! So we did it, my relative and I and your relative - we did it and then January come around and we had to do another program because we finish ours, we get on-the-job training and all that stuff every two weeks or a month we do different programs and then we did it right 'til June and we studied for I don't know some kind of thing called something culture or something like that and we had to do some measurement and stuff and we really had fun. Your relative always laughs at me. She said there was one question they say how big is the little measurement? Here I put two football fields, we always laugh about that. Here it was just a little area. She always teases me about it. But anyways we did that program in 19xx I think right until June and we finished that one and got our certificate for that too and then in 19xx I think I went back to work for the First Nation there. I think I worked until I retired in 20xx. In the meantime we always, oh yeah way back when I was still working for the government I went for trainings. I went for trainings under that first program that was a training and research institute.

I went for that and I got my certificate from them for counseling and all that and then there was another group that I went for training under too. That was really good too and I took that and after that in 19xx/xx I took training under that program, I think it's that one. We all trained there was a bunch of us from all over far north of Yukon, the same Indian women's group people and some men. We took that program. We stayed at the local hotel. We stayed there for September right 'til Christmas. January right 'til end of April, not April- February I think. Holy man we did it. It was a hard program too but I took it and it was interesting and I went from not knowing how to talk in groups right 'til going back and when I was in the vocational school for the clerk typist I had a really good teacher. She was really understanding about how I am. She taught us how to speak in front of groups. I didn't know I was just shaking everything. But she just talked to us and said just look above everybody else when you make a speech. That's how I started and she really talked to me about how to work in office, to really give us procedures on how to act in office. She was good and then all my alcohol and drug teachings, I was still shy but after my teacher talked to me she was good and the other programs I take were interesting and then we really train with the judge, he was the Territorial Judge. The judge taught us how to be in a circle. What did they call it way back? Now they call it it's in, we still got it, that justice program so I'm on that board too.

That's how that program started from way back with the Territorial Judge. He was teaching me to be a judge, to be a JP. I was studying under him for two years and then after he got out of it to be a lawyer for one of the land claims or something like that I quit (laughs) but I did pretty good in that program. He called me the "Hanging Judge" (laughs) cause I sit with him on his court

cases and how much you going to give this person? And why and all that and here I put everything down. Give them four years, and two years and all that and he'd look at me and he read it and say you don't give them that much, so he called me the "Hanging Judge". But I did pretty good. I could have stuck it out but I didn't want to be under anybody else because he was really understanding and really worked with Native people. He taught me a lot too. I think he's down on Vancouver Island now retired. So he's got children now and got married. Right now I'm still on the - they asked me to be on the justice program so I work with kids and it's really confidential too.

So that's where I am with the program and then they have the residential school program now too that I'm on too so we work with, at the high school but I never went to it because I just lost my dad so it was too much for me so I didn't take all that going to the schools. He was ninety-eight but he could be older in the old timer way, they didn't know so they just put a date and year of birth for him. So, but he taught us a lot. Even your relative, she misses him. He always come around, somebody come around where you from? We would laugh at him. So I'm on that residential school program and we go into grade 10 classrooms and they ask questions and we answer. How it was like and all that but I didn't go to that but later on I will. I think they're going to have it in grade ten Social Studies?

Yeah but when we had out, this summer, we had a tragedy in town this boy got killed and the whole town was just devastated. We were just in shock two or three whole weeks, even now I'm just getting out of it. And then on top of that we had one death, she was a young girl too. We just bury this other boy that was killed and all that and then this young kid just got killed also. He died instantly. So he didn't suffer and after that happened there was another girl, her parents are from another community. She passed away so they had a service for her up in that community that was devastating. She's our relative too and that's what we went through and during all that time we had support come down and all the social workers and all those that could help were there and we were involved in everything. All the justice and myself, all the, what do you call it-program to support residential school survivors. There's a whole bunch of us on that. We were there to help. Listen or just be there for people. But that was tough but we did it. People are just coming out of it now so they're able to go in the bush and do all their usual stuff because everybody got their healing everything come out. Talk how we felt about it. It was just devastating. So anyways that's where we're at and where my healing started was from the Native women. Man they were good. Way back there was, I don't know how they got their strength to start something like that but we got together and I always went to their program when they put it on. I took my daughter and my sister and that's how my healing started and then we always had our Kaska way too, our way. Like our Native way? We all shared same things when we were in that program. This how we do it, we do things in a circle and we talk without being interrupted, one person at a time so that's how we started and all our programs are like that and that's how I start my healing and we go to [xxxx] for one program. That's the Native way too, native program too. Indian men I think. So I went to it, I took my daughter with me and they teach us what to take for what illness and what plants and what not, everything.

Yeah, traditional medicine, they taught us there, what to take for what and all that. And those Native women, they tell us a story about themselves. How they start and what their grandmothers and grandfathers teach them. Same thing as what we go through because we just had our

grandfather and grandmother all pass away when we were young. Just our grandfather was with us. But we had other grandfathers that was there too, they would teach us things and how to have respect for others and all that. Even for plants, for animals, birds, even bugs. Even for the smallest little bug you can't torture them or do anything to them. You can't play with them or do anything or you get punished. So we always, I always talk to my kids about it too so that's what we do - so all that we're taught.

Yeah you can't have, you can't even - our brothers we got to have respect for. Our families, our dad, our uncles, mom's say you can't go around them if they're laying down sleeping. You can't go ahead of them like that, you can't step over their legs or anything, anything of their clothing or anything. She say you got to have respect for that so we say oh okay and all that things to tell us. You can't step over their gun and their belongings mom tell us and she say if your brothers go hunting and you can't look where they go and if they come back you can't look at them too until they come back. Really? Just a little while ago mom tell me things like that. Oh I didn't know that! And some things just start coming back to her too because she was raised up by her aunt. She was five years old when her mother pass away. Mom, so she was raised up by her aunt and by grandpa. Grandpa teach her things too. My grandpa teach some things to us too, holy! Yeah, my friend, she was in the same hall as me. She taught me about you know when you get your monthly she said you can't scratch your hair, you can't drink water. You wait for me because I told her what was happening I thought I was going to die (laughs) and here she'd say no you won't. It happens, every woman got to be like that and when they reach a certain age they get it. Really? I didn't know I'd say. She said that's to have kids. If you want to have a baby you won't get it. Really? I don't know nothing because mom was in the hospital too when I was growing up like that so my friend in school teach me. She'd say you can't scratch your hair, you got to have a brush or some kind of stick to scratch your hair and you can't drink water she says. Wait 'til I give you water. She gave me a small little glass, small little glass of water? Holy man, I drank that. What about during the day if I get thirsty? And so I don't know how I did it? I don't know if I drank tea or coffee or something like that. I think I never took anything until evening time, bedtime or certain time she'd give me water and I'd drink it and nighttime she'd give me a little water like that. We were just really ritual. She'd say you don't hang around with your men friends, your men cousins.

Well we don't in residential school anyways but during class and that's how she taught me and then the nuns too they teach me how to sew. She'd really good know how to make patches. Just small stitches. Now mom she sew something just big stitches and I take it away from her and I sew it. Well mom she got one eye only too. But she did teach us and we sit down and listen to her. She teach us and my sister more than what she taught us because she spent half the time with her, and my sister, my daughter both of them hang around with mom all the time since dad pass away, especially my older daughter she just with my mom like that. She don't want her to be alone and then when somebody pass away too you got to get up early, you can't sleep in and that goes for everybody and what else? You can't have hot food or anything. You got to cool it down and eat it. That's your own relative that pass away, even for anybody I guess. Holy man I just - really. I'm just like really? And what else? You have to have respect for everybody you know. Especially Elders, anybody I guess. Even little kids you got to have respect for them.

And I learned from reading. I read a lot. I get all those healing and prayer books and we always, our sisters, we always get together and talk about things. How come we ask questions to each other? How come those nuns we say and the priest tell us if you commit sin you're going to burn in Hell and all that and here they say. We don't do all kinds of sin like that in residential school because we don't know. They ask us to go to confession too and what are we going to confess? So we just make up whatever to go to confession and they just preach to us (laughs). We just make up sins just to be sure that we went to confession and they tell us oh if you commit sin and do this you're going to burn in Hell. Boy after all those things I say you know when we come home in summertime? I say lets' go to different churches and see what happens. So we go to another church and they pray differently. Jesus loves you even if you commit sin, he'll forgive you. We look at each other. How come that preacher tell us Jesus is good, God is good, he'll forgive you. How come down there they tell you if you commit sin God's going to punish you and you're going to burn in Hell. Ah funny, so we think that way. Eyyhh! We were always scared of God. We don't know how to ask him for help and then when we'd go to different churches they always say God is forgiving. He'll forgive you. Holy, we sure had different and we say gee, they always say one church is the true church. Now I know it's not only one church. Even in the books I read, they say God is there for anybody that prays to Him. Holy man we sure, I don't know. It makes me think hey. Oh I just pray, I pray to God all the time. I pray for people, especially when they get sick. When they're having a rough time. We sit down and we talk with them. Yeah we sure had a lot of people pass away in this last I don't know how many years, ten year? Twelve years?

Yeah, and then we have Indian medicine for everything. Bark and pitch is good too, good for sores. So when we go in the, go out camping we always collect pitch, bark, and tea. What we know is medicines we pick it. We go pray and pick it. We put something in there too, to replace it with tobacco. So we do that, we always talk with your relative and she teach us because her late husband teach her lots. Just really - I always say ask your husband this (laughs) so she asks him. So it's good. Gee we sure miss him, then your relative too. I miss her. Gee you should have stayed here we tell her but then maybe it good for her too to be up there because it's closer to doctor and dentist. Because down here you got to make an appointment and then by that time you're sicker and you go up, wait until that date so, it's good. Yeah we sure have good teachings from our mom and my aunt. She always teach us the same thing. Mom and her, they teach us the right way and your relative's late husband teach us a lot too you know. Grandpa teach him, mom, dad teach my kids and my partner too we teach him. He teach us their way, his way. He's part Tahltan and part Kaska.

So his dad teach him too and all these things just really come in good teachings for us and music is good too but mom say you can't listen to music! When somebody pass away she teaches that way too but then different for some others. But wherever we go, we see people and they say the same thing - back to the land to learn, to teach, and to heal. Back to the land teach and to learn because you feel really good when you go out to the bush. You just blend in with the land yeah. You feel like you're not restricted, when you're out in the bush? My brother stays out in a cabin all year around. He comes into town then he goes out. He says he likes it out there because people don't bother him that much. He stays in town everybody all the women, we want a ride, and we want money for drink. He says I don't drink-why am I going to give you money? So he says I'm just staying out in the bush. That's where he goes winter time and all. He says I want to

stay in town during the winter he says but us too we can't stay out there because we gotta be on well at least me, I got to be on the justice program. We work with kids and young offenders that haven't been through the jail system or something like that. Even them, we'll work with them. We talk with them and its good and young girls talk with them. Elders they, they choose Elders to come in and listen and give advice to them. So that's a good program that one and then the residential school - that one. We just listen to them, and give them encouragement to help them out. Even if they don't say anything we're just there. It's pretty good but that justice program, that's a really good program.

Just talk to kids about how I teach. It's from our Native way that's all. Like you, I used to be shy to be Native. When I came out of residential school holy man I was just ashamed. I didn't want to be in front of white people. They might think I'm stupid I think and you know like those nuns down there they just say oh you won't amount to anything you know, that's not encouragement. Man, I sure thought that was stupid. Even my first husband he said you don't know nothing, you can't work and then I showed up, I work in an office, I work with people. I teach my kids, I raise my kids up with mom and dad's help. He never helped me with those kids. I tell him I need money for those kids, he was like what about that guy you live with? It's not his kid's, but he helped me a lot. He helped me a lot, raising my kids. Him too he learned how I teach. He put his foot down where my girl is concerned. No more drinking you hear me (laughs) - okay dad. Yeah, all my boys too. All my kids quit except for my oldest one and the one that I raised as my son. He don't listen but when I talk with him, he does. I got one boy living in Ross, married over there with a wife and one girl but he raised his sister in-law's children they call him dad because they were that small when their dad passed away. That boy fell off a porch step and got a broken neck so those little girls they call my son their dad and I say well that's good those kids call you, you teach them. You got to be strict with them too. That's how we teach them too. They call him dad and I say oh how nice. So he tell me those kids are your grandchildren too mom, your great grandchildren. Okay I tell him because they got one girl and she goes to school too. She wants to take up stuff, different things. So she's going to go back to fall time some type of program. She wants to be a cop, she want to be this and all that, I don't know. We can't discourage them just you know be who they are with what they want.

But we share everything goes back to our way to learn. And after all those programs I go through I was, I accepted who I was I'm Native and I'm proud to be Native. I could speak up for myself now and I stick to my guns about what I know. Sometimes it might not be right but it's good, right way of teaching set by example too you know. Not gossip about people. Mom would say no good. If they talk about you let it go she'd tell me. I would say how could I just - I got to talk back, no you don't have to. Just let them say what they think. So that's what I say. Hard though, if you hear something downtown you say oh. When I used to work downtown at social assistance they would call me all kinds of names and I don't care (laughs) I just stick to what I know about. You're not getting nothing 'til you sober up or, you bring the right papers in - all your recent information. I tell my relatives anything you say to somebody you don't talk about out there when they're out in social places. That's good because then you know who, when we have circle and you hear it out there and you know who it is so if that persons in the circle you don't talk about something that's really for confidential. You know who it is too. Even how much we say, we can't discuss anybody's problems out there. It's just for the circle. Still things go out, oh! But you just watch what you say I guess. So that's what all my training is. Train my kids, taught

them my kids. Even my brothers and my nephews I talk to them. Boy our Native way is strict, if you really follow it. Really strict. When we were growing up we couldn't even talk to our male cousins just only for business and if we talk to them we can't look at their face and look at their eyes. That's how it was even with our uncles. Nowadays people just joke around with their own relatives and it's like nothing. Holy not us, boy mom would just get mad at us. That's your relatives she'd say. You treat them like that you don't talk any old way like that. Make us think? Yeah our brothers we had to treat them with respect and not get mad at our brothers especially my younger female relatives and I tell them you can't say things like that. I don't care if you get mad, you don't treat them like that you talk to them with respect. How could I if they're going to act like that? Never mind, and then I would talk to those boys after, oh okay. Boy it's tough.

I was six when I went to residential school and left at fifteen, yeah and then I went to [xxxx] for one year at a residence for kids. Then after they called it some kind of hostel but when we went there it was a residence for kids.

Yeah, I am Kaska First Nations and Wolf.

You talked about a certificate you got when you finished this program. I'm just wondering for what in 19xx.

Oh that's going to Adult Class. Up-grading.

Okay you talked about workshops when you joined with this Indian women's group and you took a number of workshops and you found they were healing for you. Can you just clarify for me what those workshops were and how they were healing for you?

Umm, that's just going back to self-awareness yeah or something like that.

Okay so self-awareness as in talking more about you and how you saw and thought about things?

Yeah.

Was that the only workshop you attended on self-awareness or all the workshops?

It was everything.

Everything was about self-awareness?

Yeah, healing things.

So is there anything in particular that you did in these workshops did they have you do certain things in the workshop?

Yeah, role play. Even in our women's group we did that and all the workshops we took as alcohol worker we had to do role play in there. For example healing, we would sit in a group.

We'd act, as a student and somebody will act as a teacher or something? Healing, healing stuff kind like that.

So kind of like counselor/client that type of role play?

Yeah.

Okay you talked also about the need to talk to heal so was that part of the process you went through in your healing? Was that you talked a lot about what was happening?

Yeah.

Okay and so, when you talked, what did you talk about? Just the school, what happened in the school or other things?

Other things like, during my life.

So like your life experiences?

Yes.

Did you also talk about the residential school experience?

Uh hmm. It's the ones that you can't talk about it or, I don't know. It's just that we can't describe it. We can't say anything or, how we're right from when we're small we can't talk back, we can't express our feelings that one

Okay. So through talking you found you were able to express your feelings?

Yes.

I find because you are able to talk now about how you were so very shy before and now you have eye contact and I can tell by the way you're talking you have a very strong voice compared to when you were describing yourself before that obviously the talking for you was very healing being able to talk about that stuff. Did you find when you talked about that it become so strong? What did you find happened to you when you talked about it?

About the things I can say?

Yes.

It's kind of, it kind of bothered me a bit but if I talk about it now I feel better. There is some things I don't want to talk about and you can hear my voice go down.

Oh okay. Yeah I've had one person describe it as they used to not be able to talk about it and when they started to talk about it and they talked more and more about it they started to feel. They are able to put it away when they are done talking about it.

Yeah, kind of leave it behind? Yeah, that's how it is because the more you talk about it the stronger you are about it. Even going down to [xxxx] in September, and even in October I just - like my mind will be going back to school. Like last year my partner and I would go down there for camping and we just go by that canyon where you can see the river - boy my heart just started pounding, I look at my partner and he was just driving like nothing going on and my heart was just pounding like that and I was like gee what the heck's going on and then after we passed that I think oh that's just a trigger. I'm, I think to myself I'm an Elder, I was there but I'm not going there now. I'm going hunting. That's how I talked to myself. Yeah and then my heart would settle down and we'd go past the residential school and I'd feel better.

Is it like that every time you go past [xxxx]?

Uh not all the time. Just certain time. Like last year it was around September and October.

So you talked about that before too like when you talked about, when fall time came you started to change - you would feel. I can't remember what you said you felt.

I felt euphoria? No, it's just that your mind and your body remembers this is the time you feel sad because you're going to go back to [residential] school and all what you see as a child you didn't like it because it's fall time it's school time. Yeah, sometimes it brings me back like that but if I talk about it all the time then September is just another month and fall time is just another season. The colors are beautiful and spring will come again and the leaves will be green again and it's just another season you know. You got to talk about all the seasons you know.

So you've turned it around for yourself and you look at the positive things about fall.

Yeah, even the winter time looks beautiful because of what Mother Nature put out there in the snow and ice and all that.

Okay, let's see. You talked quite a bit about your training and you talked about how you worked with justice, and drug and alcohol. It sounds like you have been an alcohol & drug counselor in a lot of ways and you talked basically about your experience and just to be clear, I'm pretty sure I know the answer to this question but I want to make sure I'm clear on it. It sounds like all of this information you shared with me had to do with your healing - like to take that training to talk about your experiences, to be able to pass that on to other people, and support other people? All of these things it sounds like they were all a part of your healing as well as your training, your education. It had a number of different things for you that worked for you so it wasn't just one thing it was a number of things and it sounds like through your healing, contributing to your community was something that was important as part of that healing?

Yeah, because when I talk about alcohol I tell them I was there. I say I drank, I did this, I wasn't like you know I would use foul language. "Really?"- People tell me, I say yeah I say but when I quit I learn a whole lot about myself and what I went through. That's why I talk to you, so you don't have to think you're alone in what you're going through. Everybody goes through that. So that's how I teach them.

And it sounds like traditional teachings are very much a part of that? It was a very powerful part of who you were because you learned from your mom, your mom's teachings and a lot about the proper protocols, the proper way to act as a woman around your brothers, around your uncles and if there was something that you did it came to you from your mom and not directly from the person who is talking about whatever you did that was not correct?

Yeah. Or my dad if he sees us do something he'd tell mom, mom would tell us.

Okay that makes sense. It sounds like a big part of your healing also was the land. You talked about the land and going back to the land to teach, and to heal and to learn and so to have respect for all Creation including even the smallest bug to the biggest tree out there and also giving back like tobacco if you take.

Yeah and also what I was going to say, oh yeah when we were growing up dad was always working so we always turned to our auntie and my cousin's parents. They took us out camping. They took us out and we always check on them because mom and dad can't go because dad always worked so we always look to auntie. We run over to her if we see her packing up. Where you going auntie? We're going down this way. Could we go? Go ask your mom. So we run home and tell mom and then we'd get our jackets and we'd go with them. Don't matter if it's a week or two then we come back and if he wants to walk past those lakes up past, [xxxx] they call it. If we want to go up that way she'd tell us and we'd ask them if we could go they'd say yeah, ask your mom so we'd ask mom and we'd go with them. Doesn't matter how far and we'd camp and go fishing and all that and that's how we learned and anywhere auntie and uncle go we went because mom and dad had to stay in town, dad had to work and mom had to be there to cook for him and all that and the little ones stay with her but us bigger ones we go with our auntie, our uncle.

So it was definitely a community involvement in raising you kids because your mom and dad were busy and so your uncles and aunties stepped in to help out with that?

And we felt like it was our own parents because she's mom's sister. Our auntie, that's the auntie your relative is always talking about. Really gentle. She always talk her language so we always hung around her. We know when she would talk to us. She would always tell stories. Boy she sure can tell good stories! Old timers stories and then you know those old timers stories too it may seem brutal but that's a learning experience too because she would tell us a story about this one woman she got, how is it. Two brothers they both got wives one did, they're sisters. The one married to the other guy and this one married to one and they just wanted to test how those women are alone so they hide away and then they want to listen to what they talk, how they talk when they're alone. Here that one woman she hear that's squirrel just making noise she says that's me, that's me that's how I talk, that's how I am and her sister said hey be quiet somebody

might hear you. Oh nobody will hear me she said. They go hunting they can't hear me. Here evening time they come back and the one man, one brother they come home and hear that woman she just talk any old way like that here that man come back at her, while she's still alive he slice her leg off and fling it at her and kill her that way because the way she talked. You got to be really just humble like. Here she was just talking away that's me, I'm like that. The squirrel makes lots of noise and she say that. Here that man come back and just kill her with her own leg. That's how strict.

Yeah, that's about being humble and it's almost like being humble and having respect.

Yeah about yourself - about everything. Auntie used to tell us a story about everything like that. Oh really good. She was always there for us. She was young when she got married. Must have been an arranged marriage at thirteen but that didn't work out and she met uncle and they get married.

Story 8: Adeline's Story

My name is Adeline Webber. My Tlingit name is “Kh'ayàdê” I'm from the Tlingit people and my clan is Kùkhhittàn, is the Raven Children. My father was Norwegian and he died when I was five. Yeah, so that's how my life kind of started and then I went to residential school a month later so I don't really remember a lot of the first couple of years I was there but I did fine in the residential school even though I was a small person, I stood up for myself and I didn't let people bully me and so I did okay in the mission school and you know things were not easy for anyone, but I did just fine. I didn't have any issues except you know people trying to bully you and push you around because that was one of the things I found is that a lot of the people felt threatened by the establishment I guess so they would be bullies to other people and I think that's where a lot of the abuse happened is between students. So anyway I was in the residential school from the time I was five until I was twelve and then we went one year and that mission school was still open but we went to public school when I was twelve and we stayed at home. But that life wasn't good. That life was, I would have been better off, I say that still to this day, I would have been better off if I had stayed in the mission school because of abuse and things like that in the home so those are things that I overcame and I left home early because of that and got married young.

My husband and I have been happily married now for fifty-two years so (laughs) but definitely he was the person that really made the difference for me and you know we've been together, raised our family. Our family's important to us. We had three children, two girls and a boy and now we have two grandchildren so anyway that's, that. We worked hard to make a home for ourselves and for our children and over the years we succeeded. We're very successful today and that's one of the reasons that I spend a lot of time giving back to the community 'cause I know what it was like to be young and I know what it's like to be fearful of sleeping at night, and things like that. So I go out of my way to be there for other people and when I listen to the radio, or read the newspaper and see all of these things that people are being put in jail for that when I was young, it was just said well you weren't raped so you know, things didn't happen. But still not being able to sleep at night, how can you go to school? You know things like that.

So anyway, the residential school was good for me as well because it gave me some grounding in like definitely education. We wouldn't have had any education if it wasn't for that because we weren't in the public schools and also gave me a good grounding on religion. You know not that I'm a religious person, I just have a belief in a greater being and our mother was a single mom so she worked very hard to look after us when she was able to and we lived on the land in the summertime and it was just wonderful to live on the land. Out at Fish Lake is where we would go. Yeah we always went to Fish Lake and spent the summer there picking berries, and fishing and small animals, getting small animals and things like that and then we'd go back to school in the fall.

But one thing about our mother is that she always came up to the mission school. She came up once a week and she would help with the mending. Like the ladies from town and she would help with the mending and stay that evening for supper with her and the other kids. Like there were three younger ones and anyway she was very, I think she went through a lot because you know her oldest son when he was six was in residential school and he died. He had measles and he died and our other brother he was a year younger than my other brother, he was sent to

Alberta residential school and he was there until he was fifteen and never ever came home. We didn't even know. When mom was talking about our brothers we kind of thought it was the same person because we never knew them. Then one day mom said oh your brother is coming back and we were kind of confused about that and then she explained to us that he was in Alberta and they never ever let him come home. He never had a chance to come home. So anyway when he came home he was with mom for a few days and finally he said to mom because she was called by her married name. He addressed her by her married name and said when am I going to [xxxx] to see my mother? What a heartbreaking thing that would be for her so I understand her challenges with alcohol and things like that but it still hurts to think about those things.

Like I said the residential school gave us really good memories as well. Like we had as you know, we just had that reunion and there was so many people that came throughout the day you know and I'm amazed at how many of them are still around because it's been like I said fifty-six years since that school closed so it's amazing and it was really healing actually to be going through that process because it started out years and years ago. Several of us, we all kept saying we got to have a reunion we got to have a reunion. So a couple of times we got together and had cake, just a few of us and so about four years ago, five years ago now we had our first residential school gathering. We called it "For the Love of The Children" because the children, like us were kind of lost and didn't really have parenting skills. I had to just learn it but we started out with that one gathering and then from that gathering people said you know we've got to find some pictures, we got to get our photos because we don't have such a thing. So we did that and then from that people said at the time when we got all those photos and published that book. Then they said we do have to have a reunion on the land so that's what we did and it was one of the greatest experiences I've had in a long, long time.

It was very healing because we were family. Like the kids, all of us. When we see each other it's like, we're family. It's just so good to see those people. Any time I see them we're always, got lots to talk about and so this was an opportunity just to get together formally and in fact now, everybody said well it was good to have it on the land but when we had our session after they said next time can we have it inside? (Laughs) Because they said, and do some other things like playing cards and I says well whatever you want. You just have to say, like we're so used to being told what to do that it's, it's ingrained in us like asking permission always. It's just the way it is, we're always and always afraid to be the first to speak up but I'm not like that anymore. I've come out of that, I decided that what I have to say, people need to hear so um yeah. That's just the kind of person I am. So like I said I got involved just to give back and when a women's council was started I just got involved just to see what I could do and it's amazing. Like now it's over forty years and I'm still involved and still giving back as much as I can because it's important to me. Actually I said before, it's my passion. I want to help others to become what they should be, like to reach their potential because there are so many people that still need help but it's going to be on their own terms.

Like my brother that came back from Alberta. For years, and years, and years he drank himself just like, he was on the streets and then one day he said enough and he hasn't had a drink in thirty years you know - like it's just amazing. He did it on his own. He never got support or anything and I was surprised but he just decided one day that it was enough and that he could do other things. Now of all things, just about two months ago they made him our clan leader. He

was shocked. He doesn't have his language but he has Cree. He knows Cree because he learned that down there and he said you know when he was first in school he said he'd keep getting spanked and he never had that at home and so he said to his other siblings there, cousins in their language he said why do they keep hitting me? Why are they hitting me? And he told them in their language in Tlingit that you have to learn to speak English like you have to learn and he said well I don't know how I'm going to learn if they keep hitting me? That's what he's talking about. Like he went to Catholic school they were pretty rough from what I understand, from what I've heard.

Like in the mission school we didn't get hit like that but the principal the second one that took over after his brother died. He was really strict and he believed in the strap and he really would give it to people. I got it once and it was for a silly little thing. We were just playing kick the can and we were climbing around in these old buildings and we were told not to do it but you know kids are kids. We went there anyway and then he saw us so he took us in his office and strapped me with those fan belt things and I was so scared, I was so terrified that I didn't cry until I got out of there and my sister grabbed me right away and took me down to the bathroom and put cold water on my wrists but they came up like that you know, just big welts. But that was the only time but there was other things that happened to kids I guess but I wasn't involved in any of that.

We had a lot of good times and those are the things that I like to remember and that's the things I thrive on is when we used to go for walks and the older girls would show us how to dig up, dig those roots, those bear roots. I never ate it before and they'd dig it up and clean it off on their jeans and then we'd just eat it. It was so sweet and picking berries and on the land is so peaceful. So yeah, I don't know what else to tell you (laughs).

Okay so just to clarify, the age you started in school? Five

Until how old? Until I was twelve. At the residential school yes.

And you said you attended the mission school and then you went to a different school?

Yeah we went to the first public school I went to and then to high school. It used to be an elementary and high school there.

But from five to twelve years you were in the mission school? Yep. Yep.

And how old are you now if you don't mind me asking?

I'm just about 70. I'll be 70 in November and I just can't believe it. (Laughs)

Okay so to clarify too when you talked about the reunion that it was healing for you and you did mention in some ways how it was healing and you talked a little bit about that, can you elaborate a little bit more on what was healing for you and what had you found healing for you?

For me what's been healing is just having a loving home, and making a good home for ourselves and our family and just being involved with other people that are looking to be involved like say in the community? I found that, that has helped me because I realize that although I went to residential school there was probably a lot of good that came out of that for me than bad. You know and for me, just being involved in taking and having control of my life and being in control to the point where we started a women's organization, all of those and the council in the Yukon for our First Nation were involved in that. They were involved in all of that to determine our future and to me being in control of that and seeing where we come from and where we are today is like almost a ninety-nine percent turnaround because when I was growing up when we'd walk down the street people would call us dirty Indians and we were probably cleaner than them but all that kind of stuff and the discrimination against us and how people are educated now.

All the different courses and things are culturally relevant now and working more and more towards that, to me those kinds of things have been healing to me because of the self-determination, the complete control of who we are and what we're doing and control of our future - like I'm involved as well with so many different things. Not just in First Nations but I was on the hospital board for years, I was on the Enrollment Commission for years. All of those things have helped me in many, many ways and then of course I worked for the government for thirty-five years (laughs) and started out in an institution and I think once you're in an institution you feel comfortable in an institution. Like my first job, when my sister came to me one day and said she was working at a residential school in the kitchen and she said oh somebody didn't come to work for the last week and they're desperate for a kitchen helper so I said okay I could try and I was totally comfortable working there in the kitchen and then I worked in the laundry after that and then I went back and got some more education and I was able to get my job in the government but I worked at our First Nation council for a few years too in the enrolment.

So those are the kinds of things I think I find healing and then like I said being on the land, being involved with the Elders. Like I'm on the Elders Council for my First Nation and I just find it so nice to be around those Elders but a lot of them are disappearing now and we're becoming the Elders and it's bound to be, but it's not easy to see them go because they have so much to share and they missed out on quite a few years of teaching and they're trying their hardest to give back but that's so important.

That's a lot of our history that's being lost when we lose an Elder because we come from a history that's handed down orally it makes it difficult to retain that information and there was that stop when residential schools happened. The disconnect that happened.

Yes that's right. There was a big disconnect there because the parents, they didn't have the control. Their children were just taken and then of course a lot of them started drinking alcohol and nowadays even there's people still suffering and all I can do is just pray for them and hope that they'll find their way like my brother did - just amazing. What the power of, that people do have when they try hard.

So when you talked about you felt comfortable in an institution can you elaborate more, on what it was that lead to that comfort?

Yeah I don't know, because it was familiar and I think after that, then I realized what it was you know but it just felt comfortable being in a controlled environment for some reason and I think even that holds true for people that go to the other institutions [jail] down the road here. You know a lot of them haven't gotten control of their life so when they're in that controlled environment it seems they're - they seem to, I don't know if they want to be there but they just end up there and after I left residential school I went on and did other things but I don't know why it would be that I felt comfortable there except that it was familiar - yeah and yeah.

So the familiarity that you felt I'm wondering if that had to do with attending residential school?

Yeah I think so. Yeah because it's an institution like, it's a controlled environment and you're not used to having the freedom and like I said I was married young, had our family when we were young and then eventually started getting away from that kind of thing and just living our own life but still being involved in, forming the organizations that were formed out of the friendship centre, yeah.

You talked a bit about having that control and how all those stereotypes are out there about our people and in some ways not having control when you're in residential school and always being told what to do. When you talked about the organizations you were involved in and how you supported the development of those organizations and making it in some ways what you were saying and talking about was autonomy. It was more of autonomy in some ways or sovereignty over what you decided you had to do in your life as well as for our people.

Right, right - yes just having that freedom to do what I wanted to do and for my opinions to matter. Like the first time I, it was funny the first time I did anything like that, got involved in the community with a school committee. I went to a meeting there and there was so many people, here my kids are in this school and I wanted to be more involved so I went to the big meeting, I didn't normally do that and anyway all these people were running for the chair or whatever and then this other lady I had gone to that meeting with, that's what happened and then she nominated me so everybody was saying oh I've been here in this community for eight years, I've been here this many years so when I got up I remember I was twenty-nine and I said I've been in [xxxx] and the Yukon for twenty-nine years and everybody laughed because at that time twenty-nine was the simple age that everybody was, never got older than that but anyway I ended up being the chair of the school committee and in fact, we, one of the teachers wanted to bring in Native language so the school committee said yeah that's a great thing let's do that, so we got permission and then I thought everything was going well and then two months later I got a call from one of the teachers that said why did you stop the Native language in school? I said we didn't, it was the principal. He actually ended up being a pedophile. He stopped it so then there was a big to-do and the parents were all upset so here we go to this public meeting again about this and everybody there wanted it so everybody put up their hand and said yes, and that's how we got it back in the school. But we had to fight for it, but you know those little things like that made me realize that if we can do that, we can do almost anything. We can do almost anything so, nothings impossible you just have to keep trying yeah. That's kind of the attitude I have about when we are applying for funding because that's the way it is with the women's groups, like there's no permanent funding so we end up having to apply here there and

everywhere to try and get money to do the projects we have, but you can't give up. You have to just, if it doesn't work one way try it another way so yeah.

So I've heard you talk about how you've done a lot of contributing to the community and you've found that very healing for you and you talked quite a bit about having the reunions for the mission school students and how they feel like family to you and that seeing them and spending time with them is very important to you and you found that very healing and spending time on the land is healing for you as well. Is there anything else that you can think of in terms of our personal healing that you felt you had to do for yourself?

Well just a couple of years ago I've always tried to be, like I'm the middle child so I've always tried to be the peacemaker in the family and try to not argue with people about stuff I just say oh just let it go it's not worth it, you know that kind of thing and I actually one day just my relative and I actually had a big argument and I tried to call her the next day to talk about it and she said we don't need to talk anymore. So we didn't for about six months or more but in the meantime I decided then that I was letting her push me all the time because I always felt sorry for her because she was abused by her husband, she was abused in the mission school by people she thought were her friends, they would be mean to her and bullied her constantly so I always tried to be good to her and didn't challenge her on anything.

Anyways the straw that broke the camel's back one day and anyway I went to see, I decided I needed to see a psychologist or psychiatrist or whatever and I just made an appointment and she found out that in discussing with me that I did attend residential school and then she told me, and I kind of knew it but I forgot about it that you could get counselling you and your family. But she made me realize that what I've done in my life is kind of let people push me instead of standing up for myself even though I think I did I didn't really. I didn't really fully do that so I've learned since then that I need to tell the truth instead of saying no its okay. No, it's okay, it's okay - it's not okay. I need to say that when it's not okay. Or when I don't feel right about it so I've learned to do that as a person standing up for other people but not for myself. Yeah so I went for counselling, I went to about four or five sessions with her, this lady. She was great. I thought we'd be talking about residential school but we didn't. We talked about other things, well we talked about me and how I reacted to situations and I was actually lying not only to myself but lying to the other person when I said it was okay - so yeah. So that's the only time I've ever sought any help and talking to you today is probably the first time I've said a lot of things because I trust that you're going to deal with it and it helps me too. Like I'm going to be 70 years old, I'm still thinking about those people who assaulted me when I was a child and I still hate them and I will never, people always say you have to forgive. I probably have to, but I won't you know. So anyway that's what wakes me up sometimes at night. It never goes away.

Well thank you for sharing that with me. It has to be difficult to share.

It is, but I think I have to say it because the only other person I've ever really talked about it with is my husband so you know he's the only other one, because he understands.

I think when you talk about how you said you were lying to yourself it sounds like what that psychologist taught you, is something that I've learned is that when you speak, you speak from

your heart because when you speak from your heart you tell your truth and it sounds like you were able to do that and part of the reasons why you probably couldn't was like you said where you came from in terms of the schools and you would just say "everything's fine" because I would imagine in those schools you weren't allowed to share your emotions.

No, no, that's right, that's right and in fact just thinking about it, you never ever saw people really expressing themselves because you do it when you're away from the school but never at the school because you learn to live in that environment and the thing is a lot of people that went to the mission school say it was the most wonderful experience they ever had in their life and that's good because to me, it wasn't bad but it's just that you didn't have control of your life and you know there was a little fence around there. Not even as high as that around the whole school but you never went out of it. You didn't step out there and if you did, you could get in trouble. I don't know what kind of trouble but we knew it was trouble.

Well yes and for you, you just tried to stay out of that situation?

Yes that's right. I did. I did yes. Everybody survives in their own way, yeah.

Is there anything else that you can think of that helps you with your healing, doesn't necessarily have to be a psychologist or a counsellor or anything like that, I know you talked about the land so I'm assuming when you talk about the land it's the time you spend on the lands as well?

Yes, well the thing that I find the most healing is my grandchildren. We have two of them well of course our children were healing for me. In fact it's funny, I was thinking about that the other day. I used to I guess over the years I've become really cautious but only because like getting to my age now well I have osteoporosis so I broke my ankle before and I broke my wrist before just over nothing so, I just twisted it over and it broke my ankle so I'm really cautious but I notice that I used to, we used to just do anything and everything just I learned to ride a bike, fell down a million times but it was my mom's great big ballooned tired bike and I ended up learning to ride first in my family and when we would be playing we would be jumping off cliffs and doing all kinds of things like that but the minute I had my daughter, that was it. I became very different.

I wasn't the daring person I was before because I knew I had to look after her I think I had to learn how to look after her because I didn't have any of those skills. The only thing I had was basically my sister's babies, I used to look after them and I use to babysit kids a lot - for a quarter an hour. Nowadays my god, I think it's like twenty dollars an hour I don't know but anyway yeah so that's what I had to learn but we had three children and raised them the best way we could and did our best for them and then I just became a grandmother fifteen years ago so my mom used to worry that I wouldn't have any grandchildren. She said who's going to look after you when you get old? (Laughs) so my grandson he's fifteen years old now, just turned fifteen in May and my granddaughter she just turned eleven so they're the things that really make me happy. Like my mom always said, and I truly believe it. She said you know you love your children you love them with all your heart but when you have grandchildren they are your heart (laughs). She always said that. They are your heart and to me that's healing and in fact they live in Ontario so they were born and raised in Ontario. Our second daughter she didn't have them

until she was thirty-five so anyway we get to visit them as often as possible. And especially now that the local airline has that nice flight down there I go out of my way to buy those bargain tickets and we visit them at least two to three times a year and yeah, they were here last summer for Ha Kus Teyea in [xxxx] that celebration they have so they had a wonderful time.

I made them vests and everything for that and they were so proud of it. Probably too small now, they're growing so fast. They're not going to be like me, they're not going to be short. (Laughs) My grandson is already just about six feet and my granddaughter is, I'm sure when I see her she's going to be my height and she's just eleven but slim. Both of them are very academic. They're bilingual, they're A students and we were able to put away, the education fund when my grandson was born we started a fund and now there's tons of money in there for their education which I know they will use so both of them like I said are really highly academic and in fact my granddaughter she just finished grade five and going into grade six and she just about got all the awards for school. They said they had to hold back on a couple of them and give them to other kids. Just right from the day she was. Before she went to school she wanted to be a kindergarten teacher, always. And I told her well what about adults? No. In fact she just took a babysitting course so she could be, she just got her diploma.

Yeah so, my grandson he hasn't said what he wants to do yet but I'm amazed at what kind of homework they have. Oh god, tons! Like my granddaughter is downstairs typing way on the computer and doing her reports. They do pages of reports - it's amazing. I said I don't know when they have time to have fun but they always have fun. They're into, like they swim, my granddaughter swims and she also is in Tae Kwan Do and being the little person that she is, she is the one that does the demos for when they have, like at Christmas time they have a family get together and they do demos and she's just a little thing and she's walking along and some guy touches her and she flips him and stuff like that (laughs). Yeah, she's really good and with grandchildren though we don't get to see them often but we see them enough for sure. In fact they keep saying they want to come up for the summer but they haven't been brave enough yet. Yeah, so we'll see, maybe next year.

So it sounds like being a grandmother is a good part of your healing when you talk about them and how proud you are of them and the time you get to spend with them?

Absolutely because in fact my granddaughter asked for me to come to the school to talk about Tlingit people and I guess they were talking about people of, the First People of North America and anyway the teacher, then my granddaughter spoke up and said well my grandma is First Nation (laughs) so then it just happened that we were in town and we were just leaving so I said well next time I come back and I came back in about two months then we brought some regalia and my husband came with me as well and so did our daughter and we went and lectured at her class but one thing I like about grandchildren as well. Where they live and where they go to school, I always say they're color blind cause they don't [see color] they're not, not like here where when you see a person of color is almost unusual for here? With them, there's every color in their class. Like you know granddaughter's class there's people they speak three languages. They speak English, French, and then their own traditional language, whatever it might be. People from all over the world are there in her class so you know they are just so, so different than when we grew up and they're so proud to be First Nations - proud, proud, proud you know

and we're like you say when we were younger we wished we weren't [First Nation], but now it's something that you don't ever say you're not proud to be First Nations anymore and proud to be a Canadian and proud to be a Yukoner and proud to be a First Nation from here for sure and proud of our traditions for sure. And I think that has a lot to do with it too looking at everybody now is making their regalia and doing all kinds of things. Well I don't know if you saw my, were you there when I did that cedar headband?

I heard all about it and I think somebody was showing it to me and said Adeline did that one! Oh wow, that's really nice.

Yeah I just thought wow, well they're probably going to have to do a lot of helping with me and so I thought well I'll try it I said, I'll try it and she just showed me and I just took off and made it and it was so healing, just to do that. In fact it's one of the things I said lets, like there saying what kind of activities can we have and I said well one of the things I would like to do, is be able to do that weaving. To make a hat or something and they said well we could probably do headbands and I thought it was just little skinny headbands and bracelets but it was nice thick ones so it turned out just fine, yeah and I was quite amazed and I did it in about an hour. (Laughs)

Yes that's what I also heard, they said she did it real fast and has a natural talent.

Yes which, it surprised me because beadwork - forget it! I never could do it. Mom used to get so tired of me (laughs) because by the time I'd got finished I'd have about six beads looping instead of doing two beads, I would do three, four and but now they say there's actually a pattern like that. Somebody's done something like that.

We used to help mom with her moose hides and that was hard work! But she would always do moccasins and I still have moccasins that she made and different things like my little granddaughter was able to wear a vest that's she made for my son it's over forty years old and I was thinking what I should do because we're not using it and I told her she could have it but she said no, I will leave it here for you because she's growing so fast when she comes back she's not going to be able to wear it so I was thinking I would take that, and a nice little blanket she made for my son and some mukluks and a hat and just put them in a museum in Teslin. May as well cause it's just sitting in my cupboard. But I have a lot of her work, I keep it. But I'm the one that's kind of stayed here, where my sisters moved here, there and everywhere else so that's the only reason I have a lot of the things that I do because they said they've lost things.

So you're like the keeper of all the history of your family?

Actually it's true. I'm sure I've been on every one of my nieces and nephews passports as the contact and even this year a nephew that I haven't heard from in years called my number, I've never changed my number for years so he called trying to find his mom's number because most people just have cell phones or they have a landline that's not listed but mine is still in the book but yes, they all come home to me eventually.

So it sounds like you're the home base, you're the grounding person that's here always and consistently and if they need to come home you're the person to go to?

Yes, they do that's amazing really but I moved away for three years when we lived in Ottawa but that's the only time we were away but other than that I am the main contacts that's for sure and I said there were three younger than me but they're all gone now. Like our little brother died, he had leukemia and he died when he was eight and my brother died when he was like thirty-three or something, and then my sister just passed away well six years now she had rheumatoid arthritis really bad and then her kidneys quit and she was on dialysis for about four years so then one day she decided that she'd had enough. She had dialysis three times a week, so anyway she's been gone now. Yes she got sick and she had to be medivac out a couple of times so in the end she had to move to Vancouver but she did okay because she had her pension and everything. Yes so she has two sons. I just went to my nephews, actually now that I think of it it's like today's what the 23, 22? He got married last year yeah so he invited me down. Then he said oh I have a job for your auntie at the wedding. I said oh okay what do you need me to do? He said you have to dance with me because my mom's not here (laughs) - and so I did. He had a beautiful wedding - they had it outside and his in-laws have a beautiful yard and they decorated it so beautifully it was just gorgeous and so we went there last year, I just realized that it's been a year now that he's married yeah and her other son, her oldest son is in Alberta as well.

Okay well, I don't think I have any other questions. I did like when you mentioned that you found doing something traditional like weaving was healing for you. Is there anything else that you can think of along those lines that you found healing?

Well the things that we do are really a lot to do with our family. Like our daughter, like our oldest daughter lives in Penticton and goes to Mexico in like five months of the year so she doesn't have any family and so most of the things we do is around family. Like even this last weekend we went to Teslin and because the graves are down there, like my mother's, my brother's, and my sister's grave, we buried her ashes there. We needed to clean up there's all these bushes growing all the time and people are always saying oh you can't do this and you can't do that and I said you know what. My uncle just after mom passed away, he said that we were able to look after those graves once the potlatch is all done and everything and upkeep it and then afterwards after he died somebody said oh no, no, no you can't and I said you know what I don't care what anybody else does with their loved ones, this is what we're going to do so we've kept it up and now this weekend we did a really good clean up and put some stuff so the weeds so they won't come through, that black stuff and put gravel on it and some bark and it looks so nice, it looks so nice and clean and fresh and that was really good. Really healing for me to be able to do that - to look after things and to say I understand concerns people have, like they're superstitious and I'm not superstitious and I believe my loved ones, it's only their bodies that are there now or their spirit I guess but it doesn't mean that you don't look after it and I understand like some of the old graveyards you should leave them because that's just the way it is but I've decided that I'm going to take control of the things that I really want to do because again that's something I have a hard time with is being told what I "can't" do. They're always telling me what I "can't" do never telling me what I "can" do and I don't like that. Don't tell me I can't do it. If I want to do it I will and I'm not doing anything wrong but it's just the way it is sometimes.

Well it sounds to me what you're doing is paying your respects. It's like when we have a potlatch we have a fire plate and whatever you put in the fire is to go to our Ancestors that have passed on and the ones that are to come yet. To me that's similar along those lines of going in and taking care of the grave, making it look good and it makes you feel good. It connects you with your Ancestors that have passed and allows you the time to remember them and think about them and be there in that moment with them. They're always with us even if we don't see them anymore physically we know that they're there with us.

You know there isn't a day that goes by that I don't mention my mom or think about her. Always, we're always like that. Like all of our family is like, talking about our mom because she was such an influence in our life. She was a strong, strong woman. Regardless of all of the trials and tribulations she had, she was a strong woman and she wouldn't and I don't think I would be what I am today if it wasn't for her and her believing in us. Saying that we could do things and you know my mom was the driving force always.

So it sounds like she has had a major influence on who you are today?

Absolutely because what she endured in her lifetime made me know that, that wasn't what I wanted and I watched my sisters being abused by their husbands and things and that's one of the reasons that I got involved to get the women's shelter in place. It was through our Yukon Aboriginal women that started that you know so it's because it's just seeing those things and knowing that's not what I wanted for myself or my family so really I always say my husband and I came with absolutely nothing when we got married. Absolutely nothing, just what we had and we've built what we have now to live comfortably for the rest of our life and leave something behind. You can do it if you have the will. Anybody could do it so because people always say well how come you have that? Well we worked for it, yeah. We saved for it, in fact the funniest thing is we always paid cash for everything when we were young and then when we wanted to get a loan to build/buy a house we had no credit rating. (Laughs) The only thing we had was our electric bill because you always had to pay an electric bill and what else was it, just basically that I think the electric bill because other than that we didn't have television. We didn't have those sorts of things so anyways just to add, had a high rate of finance but then we paid it off in no time because my husband was working construction and we made quite a bit of money and just paid it off and finally established our credit but it's being so proud of being able to just pay for everything and then you find out that you've got no credit rating! (Laughs)

Okay, is there anything else you can think of that you would like to add or say?

No. I just enjoyed the conversation - it's good.

Are there any suggestions you might have for me as a researcher going through this process with you that you feel could have been done differently or any suggestions you might have for me?

At this time I think you seem to cover all the bases pretty well, umm maybe I'll think about it and next time we talk if I think about anything that might be more helpful then I will but otherwise I think you covered everything pretty well. Okay, we'll stop it here then.

Story 9: Judy's Story

I'm Judy Gingell I'm going to be 70 years old this coming November. I know I don't look like it everybody say I should be 55. But I'm proud that I'm going to be turning 70 years old. My health is good which is very beautiful and I'm the Elder representative for my First Nation's Elders Council which gives me the privilege to sit at the Chief and Council table to give advice and guidance. So through my many years of leadership I believe I can do that and I felt very confident and I have received many compliments from the council members that they're so happy that I'm there with them because I bring forth through my experience, and skills, and knowledge I've brought forward good advice and I also understand if they don't accept it, so be it. I mean that's what it's all about. I don't expect them to do everything that I say. So it works well. It's a beautiful place. I've done two terms and I do have an option to go for one more term which is a three year.

In my life I've always done things in five years. I don't know why, or where I got the five years but I feel five years is sufficient to go in there and do your thing because really you start to lose interest and you're just tired of it and to be honest that's kind of how I'm feeling today. I think I've done as much as I can. I honestly think I could do another three years because they are going to have new leaders coming in but we'll do the best that we can. We'll make the best of it so anyways I've got to decide if I'm going to move on. Looking around, looking at maybe going back to school or take some training which is something I have never done. I've never really sat in the classroom to verify a lot of my learning, so I kind of want to do something here right now. There's an opportunity to apply through this First Nation trust for some training dollars so one of the things I'd like to do and I've done it for many years in a lot of my executive positions is chairing meetings, facilitating meetings and I like to do that and I'd like to get some training in that area just to make me feel more confident or kind of check on the way I do things and kind of verifies that, yeah I think I was right on track and maybe build it up more. So I've kind of been searching right now. I've never really sat there daily and searched it, like I said I'm on holidays so I'm going to look at it because the application is coming due in November to apply for these dollars so I'm going to go for it. I'm weighing it out too you know to see if this is really where I want to go and so I think I feel that's where I can go now and plus I believe I can do a lot if I sat on boards and committees, whether it's business, corporations, or organizations and contribute there.

I was not fortunate through my life of employment to be able to pay into a pension so I still need to go out and earn some money. Anybody that worked for the government had that golden opportunity - we didn't. We weren't allowed to do that but it kind of just happened when I left the First Nation council here that they started to contribute pension plans to their employees so I wasn't fortunate to get on that. I didn't make any approach to any organization and say gee you should give some of us leaders that never had that opportunity when we worked many years. Some of them left government just to serve their people and so anyways that's where I'm at. So I got to continue to work.

I feel energized. I don't feel like just sitting at home and doing nothing. I like to crochet, I like to do beadwork, and I'm buying beads to galore. I just need to start doing something with it, or sell them (laughs) so that's where I'm at today with opportunities or employment - wise so I feel I

have a lot to offer. My mind is good, it's not perfect you know, it comes and goes you remember some things and forget things, you remember people's names. It never used to be like that. You could give me your phone number at one message and I've got it in my brain. I used to be like that, I never had to write anything down I could remember it but now (laughs). Maybe that's what's making me handicapped is our cell phones because everything's got to go in the contacts immediately right? (Laughs) so sometimes I find that to be a handicap.

Yeah you don't have to remember anymore the phone does it for you.

That's right, you can even speak in there too (laughs). So that's where I'm at. I went to the residential school. I started in 19xx. I started off as a day school. We lived on [xxxx] street and my parents used to walk me to school but every recess time I used to run home. Every time there was a recess I thought school was over so forever I ran and then I don't know how or when but I was registered to stay at the residential school. I stayed there until I think it was 19xx when they moved us over to another residential school. They built the latter residential school and I stayed there until I was about sixteen years old. That was one of the things I really remembered was that when you turned sixteen you could leave school and I wish I didn't know that because that was my dream. That was my thing that when I reach sixteen I'm out of here - when it should have been something else. It should have been I'm going to finish high school I'm going to go to university. I'm going to do this. But that vision, or that teaching, or that thought it never ever entered my mind. So I left when I was sixteen and mom tried to talk to me to go back, dad always said education is very important because both of them didn't have any education and they kind of pushed, they keep telling us that education, especially my dad education is really important- get your education. That's pretty much what he could say. It will help you with your jobs and get good things but I stayed home, made sure I stayed home, cleaned the house and looked after the kids so they don't bug me too much to go back to school (laughs) being very helpful there and they wouldn't bother me too much about going back to school (laughs). So I kept the house clean, looked after the kids, fed them, clothed them.

So I kept myself really busy and that I was needed at home (laughs) so I did that and succeeded because I didn't go back but in 19xx, 'xx I think I went to the vocational school which was across the river and that's where I took upgrading. I went up to grade nine and I took bookkeeping. Like I said earlier I only practiced that for one year and then in 19xx I was approached at home to become at that time they called us "band managers" and I was approached to become the band manager for the band in [xxxx]. So I took that on without even knowing what my duties are or anything so I accepted. It was an employment. I don't think I was even looking for a job. I was just approached by the Chief then for the band in [xxxx] but he had to vacate that position very shortly because he was going to be the president for another First Nation organization so we had an election and my dad became the Chief of the band in [xxxx] so I had the opportunity to work for my father at that time and the councilors and same time I was approached to sit on the executive council for another First Nation organization and we had the chiefs which were the leadership so that was the beginning of my political field. I liked it, and I enjoyed it.

I don't know how did I know to become a band manager? Honest to God I think it's just natural. Really it's a natural thing for women because we know that information. When you look around

your house you're a manager really. You put the food together, you put the menu together you know how you want your children to dress you know it's all organizational. So I think it just was natural and then reading my materials. I do my homework. I sit on any boards or committees, anything I have to do, I read my materials because if you don't you could just be walking out there and you think you know what you're supposed to be doing but if you don't read your information you could easily get lost and everybody will follow you and then they will all be mixed up (laughs) so it's important you know what you're talking about and read your materials so I did a lot of that and even sitting on this First Nation organization I got to work with all the people in the Yukon, I enjoyed them, I respect them, I appreciate them and I felt that I have received the same respect and confidence from them and that's what makes you go that much more stronger and to stay there and move forward cause it's there and so I had a good opportunity to work with a lot of the old timers that are not with us today but they're with us because I know I think of them every other day or anytime I'm going to do something and I remember somebody said this, or somebody said that and so their faces are always there and their guidance and their advice is always there so to me it's a real blessing.

I have to say I'm very thankful to be in the leadership role for the First Nation council in the Yukon at my term and a lot of our leaders today are passing on. Just yesterday we lost another Chief, I was very fortunate to be able work with those leaders there and I was the only woman on the leadership in those days. Anytime there was an election that opened up for the executive council I always got elected to be the treasurer, or secretary, or the finance person that seems to be a key role for the women then I guess, I don't know but back in 19xx when the opportunity came open for the Chair of the First Nation council in the Yukon I thought you know I've been in a leadership role for many years I think it's time I step up. So when that opportunity came up I ran, I ran against I believe two other candidates I came second and previous Chair got back in and six months later I believe he resigned so the opportunity came open again so I said Judy it's your second time I always say things happen in three times so I thought okay this second go for it, so I did and I got it.

So I got the Chair's position and it's the first time we've ever had a woman head up a National organization like that and we were right in the midst of negotiating our land claims agreement and I was there back in 19xx when we all went down to Ontario to present the grievance document. When I decided to run for the Chair my goal was to bring the agreements to a conclusion because I felt it was already going on too long, I think it was twenty years already and we have to borrow money from the government to negotiate our agreements in the Yukon so I think we were going into the pretty high millions. I don't even want to say how much it is right now because I could be wrong but it was pretty high and I was thinking this is taking way longer than it should so that was my objective was to conclude the land claims agreements. So I went in there and sat there for a while and observed.

We had four departments we were already amalgamated with the organizations and so I looked around and watched and saw how things go and I had a meeting with the chiefs, I had an in camera discussion with the chiefs and I just brought it to their attention that this is how I see this organization to be run and that we are going to meet collectively on common issues that affect our people, we are going to develop our land claims agreement and bring it to a conclusion and it's not going to go on, and on, and on and I'm not going to be their I call it "sitting duck"

because I used to watch when they would come into a meeting and the Chair would present plans, ideas, suggestions and the chiefs around the room used to just tear it apart and you're starting all over again and I thought hmm this is not the way to go. Let's all go at it together you know so we could plan collectively as to how we're going to proceed and what's the end resolution and kind of work in that manner so I made it very clear that I'm the "doer". You tell me what to do, I'll make it happen and that's how we operated and we used to get criticized that we were spending a lot of money and I said yeah, we're spending a lot of money but we're building a government and we have a long ways to go and I'd like to see the best lawyers be hired and make sure we have good negotiators and we're going to strategize and we want more people involved. So at that time the constitution allowed five representatives from each community to come into [xxxx] and I brought people in from the communities quite often that's like sixty-five people in the room and we had to pay them honorariums, pay their expenses to come into the meeting but that's what you've got to do right - so we're building a government, we're re-building our government and taking responsibility here.

So we went through all that and what was it 19xx, gee and I can't remember dates, you'll find it in your research. We finally did it and I remember sitting in my office here. The Minister was coming back from [xxxx] or [xxxx] and he said Judy he said why don't you meet me up at the airport. He said I'm flying through, going back to Ontario. There is a board room up there and we'll have our guy's make sure all the paperwork, all the agreements is there and we'll sign off these agreements in the boardroom at the airport. I said thank you, but no thanks. I said we're going to sign these documents at a later date and it's going to be a big celebration and we're going to invite everybody so no - these agreements are historical and it's going to be treated that way so we did. We had a big celebration and had all of the signing ceremonies and speeches and we got that all done.

So at that time I was in Ontario, myself and many other leaders. I had good support from people in the community. Those were really close people beside me. I would consult with them on certain things but they always knew in the end it didn't matter what they said, at the end it was my decision and they respected me for that which was great. I respected them for that too because they know but they were a real good support to have around and we stayed in Ontario for many days because the House was going to adjourn for the summer and we did not want our agreements to be sitting out there and I'm not too sure if there was an election? There was an election coming up yeah, something like that and we wanted to get our Land Claims Agreement through the House and through the Senate because when you have an election all that is gone. You got to start over again. So we stayed down there I think I was down there for over a month, a little over a month and we pushed, and pushed, and pushed and we lobbied every office that you could find in the Capital at the House and at the Senate and we made our way through. We had our Member of Parliament who was a really good support and we had our Senator. He was a real good support he made sure we met with who we should meet and help us with our presentation.

You're going to have to look and find his name I forgot his name right now during my term. He passed on now. God it's right on the tip of my tongue, I might remember before I finish but those two were a huge help to us. A lot of the chiefs came down and was there too so we got it through, got it done and our lawyer was really good also. Our negotiators were all there. So we

made it happen. So when it was final, it was finished we awaited, to me personally I waited for so long I couldn't even get excited. I didn't even have a hurrah, hurrah, hurrah! I was just so relieved it's done and I just wanted to go back to my room and sleep (laughs) but they said we're going to go for dinner and I said go ahead, go for dinner I'm going to have a snooze and I'll come join you. So we all went out for dinner later and had a real good meal but there was nothing, I wish I could have had that happy, happy but we waited so long to get there and the overwhelming thing was just right out of me. Mine was my relief, it was over, it was finished, it's done so I felt good about that.

But when I look back I find that working with various organization and corporate organization I find that going through all that had really helped me personally to heal. It was like my healing journey because it taught me a lot especially the negotiations of the Land Claim Agreement in 19xx was not a very, very beautiful picture for the Yukon First Nation. It was very abusive, very abusive. We were treated real badly. There was no respect, gratitude, and there was no acknowledgment of our people. You know we're all put on the backburner and we were no good and then the government moved in and the worst thing they could have ever done to us was put us on social assistance and that is something we're still struggling with today because everybody thinks that we should be paying for this, paying for that. It's a real struggle, it's still there and I know my First Nations right now is looking at revisiting the social assistance where we can help our citizens to become self-sufficient. Not just hand out a social assistance cheque once a month so we're really working on that and trying to get people back to school, get an education, skills and experience. So they can be self-sufficient and it's a long ways to go but it's better than the other way around so we're working really hard on that so it's good we have self-governing because we can do our own laws, our own policies, regulations and change these programs that have destroyed our people, seriously.

So that I found through all that is my healing. It helped me from many anger when I was going to school. I did an interview in my magazine and I said in my magazine that I did not wanted to be an Indian because I think the social studies at that time said a lot of bad things about Indian people. We had the bow and arrow and we killed people and hide behind trees and that was my picking up the social studies the history and I said oh god I don't want to be an Indian, I'm not going to be an Indian (laughs) I don't want it. We were no good.

So I would say to me that's where I've done that [healing] and I did a lot of reading. I think there was one book about, I don't know what brought me to the stage where I should be reading some of these healing books but this lady her book was a real eye-opener and to me I've got that book and I go through it and I read it every time because these are things we never really talked about in our house or never got the teaching from in anybody in our house. We got a lot of teachings, I can live off the land, I know I can live off the land because that teaching was there but to address other things it was not there. I soon bought books and started reading those things and picking up things from there which has helped me quite a bit. The residential school to me I thought it did me good, I don't know how to say it but it taught me how to keep myself clean, keep our house clean and tidy (laughs) right to this day. Someone would come out and they couldn't believe my house when they saw it I don't know what they were thinking. I never asked well what did you think because these are a lot of the teachings that we picked up like we scrubbed the halls, we

scrubbed this we scrubbed that. We had to keep things in order or we got a punishment. So all that teaching it works good for me today, which is okay.

So it was the discipline, the structure that you got from the way things had to be done?

Yes so it still works. But my age now I've started to relax a bit and I don't mind some dust bunnies around (laughs) I know when I got to dig out the vacuum cleaner (laughs) so what else? So we're doing well. I feel good with a lot of things that are happening. I am so touched and honoured to be able to see a lot of celebrations. A lot of teachings of language, culture and things like that are really happening today that never happened back in 19xx. It took a while to get there, and now it is happening and I just love to go out to these places and to be part of it and we have National Aboriginal Day. Look at this beautiful building here. We could never ask for something so beautiful as this, and this is the place to be when you're in Whitehorse and it's a non-profit but it's run as a business and it used by many people in this territory so it's the local First Nation doesn't get any favoritism they have to pay like everybody else if they want to use this space here.

You and I are lucky today so it's a beautiful place - look what it is doing? You know it's anybody that comes across Canada in the government this is the place they want to be to have their dinners and if you come to their conference and listen to them they're just overwhelmed and it touches their heart to see this place going. So because of our agreements as you probably know in our agreements we don't have any rights to the Indian Act anymore. Like our agreement replaces the Indian Act so I've always kept saying that we need to get our money engine up and running our economic development and we need to generate revenue and through our agreements is always about partnership. I can remember some of our Elders say we're not here to treat people the way they treated us. That's not what these agreements are about. We're going to be in our rightful place and we want to partner. We're not against development but they're not going to do it without us and that's what it's all about. So it astounds me when government want to take us to court all the time well it just tells me we got one hell of a damn good land claims agreements - there's no loopholes so what do they want to do? Take you to court to find one and use "their" interpretation yeah. People need to understand the intent of these agreements because a long time ago we were never part of any development - never. They did whatever they wanted but today, it can't happen. Their trying but it can't happen. So that tells me we did pretty good (laughs) okay what else?

Yeah I think there's struggles, I mean there's struggles every day. I'm glad to hear what you're taking this up. We need more of our people in that field. I'm just going to touch a little on what I see out there sometimes with healing because I really feel I'm a visionary leader because when somebody says something, or I see something I could put my check and balance in place and almost immediately see what is wrong and what should have happened. I don't know how I should say this. I could say there are a lot of institutions; okay that's how I'll do it. There's a lot of institutions out there that we take our people to, send them off to healing and some of them don't really have it - the whole thing to help a person change their ways, would it be addiction. What is the cause of an individual's behavior? Why? What is it? And sometime it's very hard for that individual to really open up and say what happened to them. Why are they so angry? Why are they behaving like this because they don't want to hurt their family member, or hurt

somebody in the community so a lot of them just carry it and take it and being on drugs or alcohol I hear they say it just numbs the pain and they forget. But as soon as they come out of it they are going to do the same thing again and it just goes in circles and sometimes we really need the deep down professional people that knows how to get in there and try to help them and really relieve that.

When you look at the correctional institute we always hear and then yes, it's a known fact that a high percentage of our people are going through that and it's the same old, same old, and you hear some of them saying oh winters coming I better do something and get back up there for the winter – sad. And I can't think of, I can't understand for the life of me why, I don't care who you are, whatever leaders you get in there, especially the government because they're the ones that got the budget, they get the money for that. Why could you not just sit down and have an open discussion about how we should turn that institution around because I often say and I have read that to send one person in there you're probably spending anywhere from fifty thousand to seventy thousand dollars per year on that one individual - hey that's like a payroll for that one individual and you're going to spend that kind of money because that's including building the place, feeding them, and the staff. So one individual is costing you around seventy thousand dollars and you know what? When it comes to his/her time to walk out they are still the same. So why are we not - this is the ideal time to put some training and teachings in there for them to come out of there to be self-sufficient. What is wrong with that? Why can't we have a big territorial discussion on that and see if that could even be pulled off, even make it happen you know.

So I kind of look at things like that because a lot of our people do need help and they just don't know, they don't even know how to ask, they don't even know how to reach out. They can't even open a book to read like I do. I know there was something in my life; I didn't even understand the word love. So I had to go get a book and read about love! Just to find out what the hell love is you know and so a lot of that, if I go through certain things like that then I'm sure a lot of our people go through and today you still find a lot of our people really mean with each other. When somebody's happy they're doing well, they go out there and do things to pull you back down and say things about you behind your back and eventually, eventually you hear about it so you know what's going on there. Why are you like that? Like let's all move forward. I mean sure I've done things forty or fifty years, oh good yeah I can say that, forty or fifty years! (Laughs) that I may not be proud of but I didn't do it all my life and I'm here today so why you want to throw stuff like that in our, in people's faces. You know things happen - we all learn, we make mistakes, we all learn, and we all move on.

So I think that to me that's what seemed to have helped me quite a bit through my years and feel good about who I am, and what I do, and what it is I'm trying to do and just keep moving forwards. Any awards that I have received, I didn't ask for those and it just tells me, and I tell people - people are watching and people were definitely watching me and I got recognition and I wasn't working for that. I just went out, I believed in what I wanted to do and what was the best for my people and I went and did it worked really hard at it, but I also really respected the people I worked with. I never feel I taken anybody for granted. I respected the people that were around me and we all receive the credits and if I got recognized I think that's a good thing, or anybody else got recognition it's a good thing because we can publicly go out there and tell our people

stories through us, and what's wrong with that. So I found that is good and today I'm finding more and more non-Aboriginal people are really standing behind our people, and working with our people, and love to be with us now. I see more of that than I did back in 19xx when they threw us down at the other end of town, in the swamp, in the sewer.

When I was offered the opportunity to be the Commissioner of the Yukon the Prime Minister called me and asked if I would be interested and what can I say but yes. I was ready to move on from the First Nation council here. Today, I would say I regret moving on because I think I should have stayed a little bit longer to help with implementation. Not to say that things didn't go right, but I felt that I left too soon. I should have stayed on a little longer and kind of saw the implementation through a little bit and because I sat on some boards. Land Claim boards and I was astounded some people weren't even following the new agreements and I said come on, who do you think got you here today? Look at the Umbrella Final Agreement and in the Umbrella Final Agreement you don't have to guess because there are objectives and that's what we have to deliver. I happened to hear one person say oh my god look, our mandate, our responsibility and I'm sitting there so this is where and when I hear these kinds of things I know I've become very handy (laughs) and I'm glad I'm there! And that's why I feel I have to be there, I can't give up now you know. I still need to go - move forward. But when the opportunity came up for the Commissioners, I thought it was a golden opportunity and I accepted it and but it also made the Capital known that I was very interested. I heard that the present Commissioner was going to be leaving - he's going to be moving on and they're going to be looking for another Commissioner so I kind of gave a heads up and let them know I was keenly interested but I also gave them other names too, of other people and when the Prime Minister made his choice I got a phone call from him. I never really knew and I didn't know where the Commissioner's office was in Whitehorse. I had a meeting with the former Commissioner and I had to ask my assistant - can you find out where the Commissioner's office is I have no idea where it's at.

So she did, she looked it up and I had a meeting with him and when I got into the position it was quite, it was very noticeable, very clear that a First Nation was coming into this position because the ceremonies we had you knew a First Nation is coming into this position. I mean I wore outfits; I had outfits made for my celebrations. Any kind of functions I go to I had my sister make me a button blanket that I wore quite often and there was prayers by Elders and other people that I've invited and First Nations were invited to a lot of functions that I hosted which they never were before. I went to the First Commissioner's Ball I think if there was anybody there that went as a Yukon First Nation was probably only one person. And yes, I went to my First Commissioner's Ball and I had a lot of First Nation's there. I loaded the plane up. I even invited my relatives from Alaska. We took over (laughs) we had a ball! Yeah, so it was a very good timing too because they were doing the Alaska Highway the Gold Rush Anniversary so that was kind of really good and here I am First Nations and related to Keish so that worked out well and I had fun.

The first year I thought okay Judy what is it that you're going to do to make some difference here? And so that's when I sat with the former commissioner and I got along good with him and I have high respect for him and I said what do you think of this idea. Do you think I can go in there and start up just call it the Commissioners Potlatch? Which is just a celebration and he said you can do whatever you want Commissioner. Really?! So that's exactly what I did and I would

like to think that a lot of the celebrations that are happening today are probably the spin-offs from that because I had it down at the Rotary Park. Can you imagine what it would have been like if I had it here? And I had it down at the Rotary Park and we had about three to four thousand people attending and we even had a big tent set up and we had feasts. We all sat there, we all ate and had performers on the platform. We made four button blankets to give to the organization so they could use that as their décor or however they want to use it and those blankets were done by the people that attended and we gave out something at the end because usually when you go to a potlatch you give a little gift out and I sit on this council for this community, this building here so I said whatever we do, we have to take the protocol of what it is like to have a potlatch so when people leave we should give them something to take home so we're working on those kinds of things, we're working on a gift shop for here and things like that but I'd like to really say that I feel that these big celebrations that I had there at my time is a real good spinoff for what you see going on today. I think I would like to take some credit on that. Not all, but some if it and this is very overwhelming finally, happening. We're doing it. Okay.

I remember the Commissioners Ball I actually miss them when you left office.

I don't know why the other Commissioner never did it, because she could have. Anybody could have and I was a little annoyed with some people when another Commissioner came in and they couldn't see a non-First Nations hosting a potlatch so they were a little bit turned off to me. I think that's okay as long as he's following our protocol and he brought me in to help him so it is not like he did something [incorrect]. We still have a lot of people that destroy things and I'm going to honestly say that I know there were some people there that were trying to destroy that because they weren't behind it. No kidding, I know. I know, because they complain about us using a button blanket blah, blah, blah. They're not Tlingit's blah, blah, blah. Hey enough you know and these are coming from older people and they shouldn't be doing that. This is what we do. Look at who you marry? There's people married to people all over the place and you do incorporate things with each other. We are First Nations, what the hell. Just because you don't come from Alberta it shouldn't be up here? Hey enough. This person's got family here and what, that's a First Nation, just a different nation. We're all First Nations. We learn from each other. How do you think we survived? How do you think we know all this stuff? You want to start complaining put your beads away.

Yeah it's about the interconnectedness that exists and that's very important.

Yeah bring it up more you could roll that part up (laughs), help me.

Yeah I actually talk quite a bit about that, the interconnectedness I think it's very important to recognize that and that you have to be very respectful of other people's practices and that there's nothing wrong with having that as part of your practices as well. The biggest thing for me that I found that I thought was really important was I didn't know this about what one of our leaders said when he said "Together today for our children tomorrow: I didn't realize when he was talking about that, I just came to that realization a while back when I heard it was that he wasn't just talking about Aboriginal children - he was talking about ALL children.

Yeah because the agreements are about all people - you live in the Yukon? Those agreements apply to you. So it's all people.

Yeah so, that totally put it into perspective for me and like okay, and I see where he's coming from and that changed "my" perspective on how I look at things even more.

Yeah, yeah - okay where else? Any place else?

Is there anything else that you can think of right now?

The only part, like I said I kind of got a little bit emotional there when I said I was spending any time with my grand boy. I took him over to Alaska for fishing. One of the things that I went through and I see it today is when I was working so hard, I can honestly say and admit that I neglected my children. It's not like I left my children home alone, my husband was there but what a lot of mothers would do when you're home with your children. I mean, I went to a lot of their functions but I was not there one hundred percent. When I look back today I wish I could have done a lot of things. I did the best I could, so I just feel I could have done a little bit more. I envy a lot of people today that do a lot of things for their children and I kind of wish darn it, I wish, but really I think in our times there was not much right. What you see today, we didn't have that you could take your children to and there's not much that I can do about it today. I can look forward to the younger kids and be able to say that and somebody reading this they will pick up on that. Life is so short, like I say. Eighteen years and then they're out the door. Eighteen years is very short when you think about it. To me at that time I thought it was many years you know (laughs) but it's come and gone, yeah so. Other than that I think I'm pretty much finished.

You mentioned something about some articles that you talked about at the beginning. You were talking about some articles that you were in.

I've got them yeah.

You mentioned a magazine or something that you were in.

There's a magazine they have it - they have it but that dress is mine [dress on display in the culture centre]. That's the dress I designed. My mom and friends had put it together - they did all the beadwork. I just designed it and that's the first dress I wore to the Commissioner's Ball. I just became the Commissioner then, 19xx/19xx? They got the magazine and if you want to ask for it. Tell her you can make a copy. They have it here.

Yeah that would be great. Okay so I do have some questions. What is your clan?

We're from the Marsh Lake area and we are from the, you have to get the pronunciation right it's, Ganaxtedi.

Okay so you mentioned when you were in residential school and you realized that at sixteen you could leave and you made up your mind, I'm out of here, I'm gone. What precipitated you to want to do that? Like what?

I was tired of school, I was tired of being, too much rules or regulations but you know what? There are rules and regulations for all our life (laughs) what we even do it to our children! But there was too much do's and don'ts. I mean through the early years in the mission it was very religious. There were more "Don'ts" than "Do's" – you get out there and try to have fun and when there's Christmas concerts or Easter. It was really strict you know. You can't even stand up and whisper to somebody beside you when you're getting ready for dinner and you get a strap or you got to stand up at the front of the wall there while everybody is sitting there eating. You know there was a lot of that real mental abuse. Can't even have a wrinkle in your bed, it's got to be just smooth and then we get a lot of hardship and abuse from older girls. Like name calling, treat you mean, hurt you, and you have to wash their socks pure white again. Their socks could be black underneath and you got to wash it as pure white as this. So I could end up sitting in the bathroom there just scrubbing these white socks 'til they're white. So there was a lot of this kind of things happening.

So when we got to the second residential school it was a little bit gentler but you just want to get out of there. I mean you live that life too long because every time you go home there's relaxation and then there's nobody on your case all the time and you can do what you want and it was a relaxed environment. I mean my family was always out on the land so you can run, make noise and you're not going to get a strap. So you kind of get tired of it I guess, I know I did. I just wanted out, just get me out here, I had enough of it.

Because so it sounds like there was a part of you that said there were good things that happened at the school like you found structure there, you learned to keep your clothes clean, your home clean, yourself clean and things like that but it was kind of double edged sword because in the actual school it was pretty extreme.

Yes, yes and very grateful to have had an education. A lot of us stayed up on [xxxx] street and then if we're not there then we're out on the land. Like dad used to cut wood and stuff like that - anything to get a job, cat operator and things like that. We were always there and it was always good to get home.

Okay I have other questions. You kind of answered this question and I just want you to elaborate a little bit more. How would you say your career, and you talked quite a bit about your career and all of the things you've done in your life and it sounds like you've done a lot in your career so far and it sounds like you still have more to do. But how would you say your career has contributed to your healing? Because it sounds like your career is pretty important to you and everything that you've done and all you've done is for your community.

Well it's like you're going out there and you're rebuilding something. You're rebuilding an organization. So I see myself going out there to help when something needs to be done. If there is a new program or a new this or a new that. I like to be a part of it because in the end something good is going to happen. Something good comes out of it. So there's more, a lot of organizational building. A lot of governments are about making things better and I like that drive.

What did that do for you - in here (hand to heart)?

It makes me feel very good, like I feel energized. It lifts me up, it makes me feel comfortable, and it makes me feel good. It's not like, I don't think about I'm there I'm going to heal something in me. I think it's just me (laughs). It's my doing, maybe it's my passion.

So "doing", there's something in it also for you? There's a vested thing in there for you in terms of feeling good about what you're doing for your people?

Uh hmm I feel I'm a good listener that helps. You want to give them what they want or you want to be part of it? So it uplifts you so. Like I said I'm a "doer".

You talked a bit about going through all of what you went through in your career and everything and you said that it helped you heal and taught you a lot. What would you say helped you heal and what did it teach you?

Well I think through the residential school and when you are a victim of the Indian Act. Like when I married my husband they called me a white lady, and I wasn't a status Indian and you couldn't do certain things and when we were doing our Land Claims Agreement that destroyed, that took away all that and in place it rebuilds who we are as a nation. It rebuilds, it brings us back - like we don't call ourselves Indian anymore. You are a Daklawedi, you are Tlingit, you are southern Tutchone. It's better to be called that than to say that I'm an Indian (laughs). The word Indian it really does - it's not even ours, it doesn't even belong to us so to be able to identify ourselves who we really are by our clans.

So a part of that was building up the identity of who we really are as a people as opposed to what the government said we are status, we are non-status because you married this person.

Exactly yeah and it gave us our rights back as a government. As citizen to elect our Chief and Council not for the Minister to say yes, it's okay to have this person as your, or for this Minister to say this or that person is your member. We have that authority now so we can do that. Or this is the best program that is the best for your people. No. We were going to develop a program that we want and govern our own people so that's what I meant.

So it's about sovereignty and having that control over what somebody else says they need to control.

Yeah, exactly - it's in our court.

Yeah okay. You talked a little bit about you didn't understand love, and you needed to read about that. So when you think about that. What had learning about love done for you?

(Laughs) I don't know if I want to go there. No I just. Maybe I should just use that as an example like when you want to learn something like love, respect, etc. I mean my daughter tells her friends if you want to know anything just come to my mom's house - she has a book on it (laughs) - love, jealous or whatever. Yeah she is right. So here I am showing a bookcase to my

husband that I want him to buy for me and he said he will, so I can put all my books there. Yeah I like my paper books instead of e-book (laughs)

I agree with you, I'm old school. I like the book in front of me. I'm a book collector myself. I have a lot of books and going to school I've got even more from other scholars, other students.

Yeah I bet. Good access to books. No, it's just reading up about it and learning. I like to read personal stories of individuals that have gone through their struggles and what they have done today to come out of it and be successful and know about it, and hear and read about it and I share it with other people.

And would you say you apply it to yourself?

I would say oh yeah, there are times you read through and it applies to you. You see it, oh there! They're talking about me. There's a little part there that you know kind of hits home which is good. More and more of our people need to come out and do this kind of thing. Write stories, write some stories. You just never know who you're going to go out there and help.

So it sounds like its information that you can carry with you to pass on to other people and at the same time there's information that comes from those books that you see may apply to you and it sounds like you enact it within yourself to change that.

Because it helps you and like I said I haven't gone to (school) and now I might go back to school or take up something so I could do something because I'm not ready to quit. Yes.

Yeah well I think all of us in our culture we believe that sixty-five is an age that came from colonization and...

Exactly yeah just to give you a pay cheque (laughs) and you need that.

We never, our duties to this life never ends until we're actually gone.

It's just like mom she'll say ninety-one! But I feel like I'm sixteen, twenty (laughs) I don't feel ninety-one. People say I look good at ninety-one. Well how am I supposed to look she says. She's so funny. I don't know she says. (Laughs) how am I supposed to act? She's so precious.

She is. I bet she has a lot of knowledge and information.

Yes she sure doesn't talk much. I don't know, once in a while she'll say something.

That's when everybody listens though.

Yes, yes! When she says something you better listen because it will be awhile before you hear it again (laughs).

Okay well I think I have one last question. You made the comment that when you became the Commissioner of the Yukon and you said that I have to be there and I can't give up and so when you think about that, was that a part of your healing when you think about that comment that you made and how did it help in your healing if in fact it was?

I don't know if I could really connect it to my healing. It's just, it was an opportunity, it was something different and really after the Agreements was finished I was ready to kind of relax and do something different, move on and like I said this opportunity was there and so I took it upon myself. I know a lot of times in my life when I do things I don't always feel confident when you're going to go in there but you know something - I'm pretty good at giving a good kick at the can and do the best I can (laughs) and I'm not afraid to ask. So you know it was quite the thing to tell somebody I'm interested. Normally I don't do that and this time I said I'm interested, and if you're interested? If you want to appoint somebody I'll be glad.

Okay so I lied to you, two more questions came to my head when you were talking. You talked about your grandson and spending time with him and you talked about not being there for your kids one hundred percent of the time that you wanted to be but when you think about your grandson, and spending time with him - what did that feel like for you?

That felt really good. It just, I felt good, I felt sad. He's sixteen. I spend a lot of time with my grandchildren. You ask my son and daughter-in-law, and my son-in-law and my daughter. They know grandma. But I don't know why at that time when we went out fishing, and I just maybe I just wanted, maybe I should have spent a little bit more out on the land with them if anything. But other than that I pretty well know my grandkids when they were growing up and where they are at today. They were taught right from baby. I laugh I took the oldest one he's eighteen. I owed him a birthday dinner and I was really surprised he did this. We were getting out from the table and I took him and his girlfriend and so we went out to eat and this was a birthday dinner and I said we need to have your birthday dinner because you're going to go back to south soon. So we went out the other night and had a good meal and a good visit so I got up and gave him a hug and he said where's my nose? So all three of them when they were just little ones they were growing up I used to always say grandma's nose - you know how our people smell nose grandma's nose, and they all go like that. Yeah even my grand girl, I go down to the states, her and her mom and dad stay there and I go down and visit and as soon as I get to the airport - grandma's nose, she knew what to do. (Laughs) so when I was giving him a hug he said grandma's nose (laughs). So I do and I was surprised, right out in public, right there and I smell his nose. No, it's just this fishing I went out with him I really enjoyed it, and it really just touched me there. I had my aunt there and her son and they were helping me, helping him put on the fish hooks, what line to use, and which hooks to use and oh everything, it was just overwhelming and I thought, kind of told me hmmm, you know he's sixteen he should have known this. Somebody should have taught him this before (laughs) but hey he got to know his grandma, and his auntie and his cousin so it was good yeah. It just kind of touched my heart a little bit. But it happened, that's the important part. It happened yeah so. We had a ball.

Well its interesting just talking to you, there's so many different pieces here when you talk about your family and I really want to ask you - do you see family as part of your healing?

Oh definitely and sometimes we overlook that right? And we don't see it that way but right now we do our best we can with our mother and spend as much time as we can and every little bit of that sometimes we take for granted and we don't see it that way. It is good medicine and we don't see it as good medicine. So yes, so that's good.

And you talked about sewing and you like sewing. So do you find healing in sewing as well?

Oh for sure, it's one of the most relaxing thing to do at the end of the day. You get into it and you concentrate on that and it takes your mind away from thinking too much but sometimes when you put it down, sometimes it's getting it started. It's just in the last year that I start making necklaces and I have young ladies out there c'mon you got to start your business. You can call it Judy's beads and I gave a lot of them, like I made this one a crochet and I made a lot of them. I must have made over forty or fifty of these of different colors and I gave it away at my sister's potlatch and I have sisters that keep saying you got to get busy. Oh my god, don't ever take me to a bead store. I went to Alaska I did not walk in the wool shop and I did not go in the bead shop because I know if I went in there, I know what will happen. So I have more than enough beads. I just need to sit down and start doing it because I feel that if I'm going to let things go next April, maybe doing some beading is going to help me do some things and sit on boards or committees, or going out there and chairing meetings is what I can do.

So it sounds like the crocheting is also pretty important.

It is very, and I do a lot and I get overwhelmed. Right now I'm at the stage where I don't really know what I want to do I just say yeah, I want to do the beads I get started, I feel good about it, I leave all my crochet. I could let my crochet go. I let it go one year because it got the best of me. I was doing too much of it. So I just said enough and I didn't touch it for a whole year so I need to do that now and I don't know why I'm crocheting so much because I don't even hardly see my stuff get finished (laughs). It takes forever so I need to stop it. So I'm doing a little shawl for myself right now and so that's something that I can use because I could come in here and put it on because it does get a little chilly in here once in a while but it is something I can carry in my bag, it's little things like that. I do a lot of blankets for potlatches. I enjoy crocheting because if I sit down and watch television, my hands got to do something because if I sat there for an hour or two hours watching television and get up, I have nothing to show for what I did in the last two hours. Why? Why do I feel I have to show something for?

Because you're a "doer".

(Laughs) So there I go, I sit there, unbelievable.

Okay you talked a bit about your career and it sounds like your career is pretty important to your healing because it helps you help other people and as you said you're a "doer". It sounds like family is really important to you and spending time with them has been a part of your healing. Your crafts in terms of your sewing and your grandson, your grandchildren sound like they're a big part as well.

Oh yes very - very. They know grandma (laughs).

And also the books. It sounds like you read a lot of books. I love books.

And it sounds like you dispense that information to other people to help support them and also if there are topics in those books that you find apply to you. It sounds like you enact them to be a part of your life and your healing as well.

I need to send or meet up with you about what my Coat of Arms is all about. I have a Coat of Arms because I was Commissioner. We are granted to have a Coat of Arms and you need to see mine. So I will find what I have on my computer and I will send it to you and try to send you the little write up I have about it.

That would be awesome, I would love that.

Okay because that is what the Coat of Arms is about.

Is there anything else that you would like to add?

Not right now but anytime I think, or if you think of something don't hesitate to call me.

Are there any suggestions or anything you'd like to tell me about this process, or anything you feel I could change?

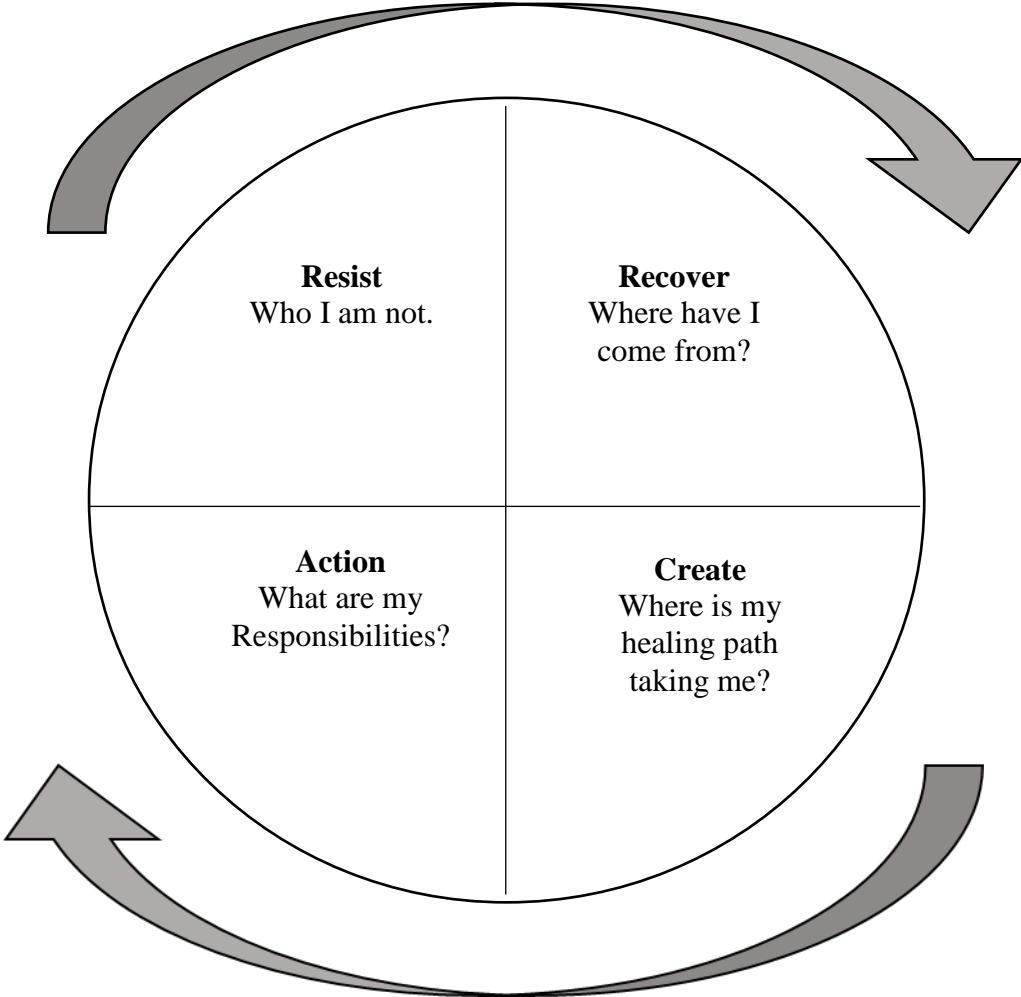
I don't think so. I feel good about it - yeah, very relaxed, very comfortable. I feel safe, yes and respected. Yes, so keep up the good work lady.

Thank you Judy.

And especially when you come back yes it's important and I'm so glad to hear this because a lot of times like you say, people come in the past and they [other researchers] hear us out and they took everything and they ran off and that was it. But our people, there's so many of our people out there that really need, people need to get to the root of their problem and you try and help them and I know it's a struggle. I know one person had a hard time bringing out what happened to him and when it did come out he didn't realize how good it felt. He got rid of all his anger, they don't know that and he had to dig, and he had to be patient, and we had to give them that time, yes.

Okay Judy thank you. Well thank you very much.

Appendix B – Who Am I? Diagram



An adaptation from “A Recognition of Being: Reconstructing Native Womanhood” (Anderson, 2016).

Appendix C – Letter of First Contact



Department of Educational and Counselling
Psychology, and Special Education

The University of British Columbia

Faculty of Education

2125 Main Mall

Information sheet for the research project: **How do Yukon Aboriginal People Define Healing from the Residential School Experience?**

My name is Maisie Smith and I am the primary contact, I am member of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and I am a part of the Dakl'aweidí Clan. Alanaise Goodwill is the principal investigator for the project and is the Assistant Professor in Counselling Psychology at UBC and a member of the Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation, Treaty One Territory. I am conducting my masters' thesis research on the project: How do Yukon Aboriginal People Define Healing from the Residential School Experience? This study will help inform counselling professionals to understand how Yukon Aboriginal people define healing from the residential school experience.

The goals of this study are: to better understand what healing means to the survivors' of the residential school experience who are on their healing path. What helped to support survivors on their healing from the effects of the residential school experience? What continues to support survivors to maintain their healing? This knowledge will be helpful to counselling professionals who supporting survivors.

I am seeking Yukon Aboriginal people who have attended residential schools in the Yukon who are willing to be participants in this research. As participants, teachers, and/or Elders you have the knowledge, experience, and wisdom to be a very important contributor to this research. We strive to help support each other the best way we know how and sharing of our knowledge has been a big part of our traditional ways of

knowing. We need to have a voice in how we are supported by the counselling profession in order to better support our people. As a participant, you will be engaged in the study throughout the entire research process, if you choose to be: 1) to begin participants will be given an option of how they would like to start (i.e. ceremony – prayer, smudge, etc.); 2) an explanation of the diagram “Who Am I” will be discussed; 3) participants will then share their story of their healing journey. This session will be audio recorded, translated with the assistance of a professional transcriber, 4) if allowed questions may be asked for clarity about the healing story; 5) to end, the option will be with a ceremony (i.e. smudge, prayer, etc.); 6) The audio recording will be listened to by the principal investigator (PI) and audio and hard copies will be given to each participant of their story. The stories from all participants will be reviewed to look for themes and ideas of what supported Yukon Aboriginal people on their successful healing path. To answer the questions: “How do Yukon Aboriginal people define healing from the residential school experience?” and “What continues to support survivors on their healing path?” By engaging in storywork this may arouse feelings of distress. You will also be provided with a list of counselling resources available to you free of charge should you indicate a need for this.

Copies of the audio recorded healing stories will be available to the participants. Transcribed copies of your healing story will be provided to you as they become available.

The contents of research stories and audio recordings are subject to strict confidentiality and the PI (Dr. Alanaise Goodwill) is a Registered Psychologist with the College of Psychologists of British Columbia and is bound by the code of conduct which can be found at:

<http://www.collegeofpsychologistsofbc.com/docs/10.CPBCCCodeofConduct.pdf>

Electronic data and audio recordings will NOT be stored on the Web or a computer hard drive. Your name will NOT appear in any text based data or reports generated, and you will only be identified by your research role (i.e. participant, teacher, and/or Elder).

Electronic data and audio recordings will be stored on a password protected, encrypted USB stick. This USB stick and all paper transcripts generated from this research and the

audio recordings will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the Principal Investigator's research office at UBC Vancouver for five years after the conclusion of the study at which time it will be destroyed.

Specific questions may be asked in order to clarify any uncertainties. You may ask questions at any point during the session and are free to withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice.

The healing journey stories shared will be audio recorded and transcribed. You will be given the opportunity to read the transcripts and make appropriate changes. The audio records will be erased upon completion of the study. Myself and Dr. Alanise Goodwill are the only people who will have access to the audio recordings. The total amount of time that will be required of you is dependent on the length of the healing story you share and whether you wish to be regularly updated on how the research is progressing. I will follow-up with participants about how they are doing after sharing their stories and will be available to address your concerns.

Will you be given a gift for your time/ taking part in this research study?

Participants will receive a gift as a part of our traditional custom and protocol for participating in sharing your knowledge and experience of how you define your healing journey.

I am seeking six - eight people to participate in sharing their healing journey from the effects of the residential school experience by telling their story as participants, teachers and/or Elders in this study. Your contributions will be kept confidential and I will secure all research data for five years.

If you are interested in contributing your knowledge and wisdom about how you define healing from the residential school experience to the field of health, healing, and counselling of our people, please contact me at:

Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology and Special Education
Faculty of Education
2125 Main Mall
University of British Columbia
Vancouver, BC Canada V6T 1Z4
maisie.smith@alumni.ubc.ca
Phone : 867-333-9370
Gunalchéesh,

Maisie Smith, M.A. Student, UBC

Appendix D – Consent Form



Department of Educational and Counselling

Psychology, and Special Education

The University of British Columbia

Faculty of Education

2125 Main Mall

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Study Title: How do Yukon Aboriginal People Define Healing from the Residential School Experience?

1. STUDY TEAM

Who is conducting this study? The Primary Research Contact and the Principal Investigator (PI):

Maisie Smith (Primary contact) and Dr. Alanaise Goodwill (PI), Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology and Special Education, University of British Columbia. Those who participate in this study will also be known as participant, teacher and/or Elder.

3. INVITATION AND STUDY PURPOSE

Why should you participate in this study?

You are interested in being a participant and using your knowledge and wisdom as a residential school survivor and how you define healing from this experience to co-create the audio material necessary to meet the goals of this study. The goals of this study are: to explore how Yukon Aboriginal people define healing from the residential school experience in the context of using our oral tradition by telling me about your healing journey through storywork. This aim will be pursued by one research question and a

guideline diagram called “Who Am I”. “How do I define healing from the residential school experience?” The guideline diagram called “Who Am I” is presented in a circle with four quadrants that asks the storyteller to think about their healing journey in the context of: Who are you not?, Looking back...where have I come from?, Where is my healing path leading me?, and What responsibilities do I have to myself, to our culture and people?. When we decide to walk on our healing path this is the kinds of questions we must think about, and ask ourselves. By asking ourselves one of these questions we see how this will change our response to the other questions in the circle. When we think about our responses we begin to realize these questions go beyond the personal and extend to all our relations.

As a participant, you will be among a group of participants (6 - 8 people) over the age of 19 with the following composition: 1) attended residential school; 2) a citizen from one of the 14 Yukon First Nations; 3) living a healthy lifestyle (maintaining balance – mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual); 4) have been on your healing path more than 2 years; 5) articulate and speak English fluently; 6) have supported and contributed to our community; 7) feel confident you are holistically healthy enough to discuss your healing journey without serious adverse effects to your well-being and safety; 8) should adverse effects arise and be noted the storytelling will be stopped and/or debriefed.

4. STUDY PROCEDURES

You will be engaged in the study as a storyteller set out by the oral traditions of our culture to discuss your healing journey from the residential school experience. This process will be: 1) opportunity to open with a traditional/non-traditional ceremony of your choice (i.e. prayer, smudge, song, etc.); 2) as per our traditional protocol a gift will be given to you; 3) your story will be audio recorded; and 4) if you permit there may be questions asked for clarity purposes only; and 5) follow-up with/by participants as needed throughout the entire research process.

Copies of your audio recording will be available to you the participant. Transcribed copies of your healing journey story will be provided to you as they become available.

Electronic data and audio recordings will NOT be stored on the Web or a computer hard drive. Your name will not appear in any text based data or reports generated, and you will only be identified by your research role (i.e. teacher, participant, and/or Elder).

Electronic data and audio recordings will be stored on a password protected, encrypted USB stick. This USB stick and all paper transcripts generated from the storytelling will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the PI's research office at UBC Vancouver for five years after the conclusion of the study at which time it will be destroyed.

Specific questions may be asked in order to clarify any uncertainties. By engaging in storywork this may arouse feelings of distress. You may ask questions at any point during the process and are free to withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice or questions asked. You will also be provided with a list of counselling resources available to you free of charge should you indicate a need for this.

Your stories will be audio recorded and transcribed. You will be given the opportunity to read the transcripts and make appropriate changes. The audio records will be erased upon completion of the study. The PI is the only person who will have access to the audio recordings. The total amount of time that will be required of you will be dependent on how long you choose to tell your story and how much you wish to be involved in the research process after your story has been provided.

Will you be given a gift for your time/ taking part in this research study?

Participants will receive a gift as a part of our traditional custom and protocol for participating in sharing your knowledge and experience of how you define your healing journey.

Who can you contact if you have questions about the study?

If you have any questions about the study you may myself at 867-333-9370
maisie.smith@alumni.ubc.ca or Dr. Alanaise Goodwill at 604-827-0627 or by email at
alanaise.goodwill@ubc.ca.

Who can you contact if you have complaints or concerns about the study?

If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Ethics at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail RSIL@ors.ubc.ca or call toll free 1-877-822-8598.

Consent and Signature Page

Taking part in this study is entirely up to you. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to take part, you may choose to pull out of the study at any time without giving a reason and without any negative impact on your well-being.

- Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.
- Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.

The image contains three circular forms for consent and signature. The top-left circle contains a statement of consent and fields for Name, Date, Address, Signature, and Phone #. The top-right circle contains a statement about future contact for transcript review and a signature line. The bottom circle contains a statement about future contact for similar studies and a signature line.

I have read and understood the above and by signing, I CONSENT to being a research participant. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name: _____
Date: _____
Address: _____
Signature: _____
Phone #: _____

CIRCLE:

I AGREE DO NOT AGREE
to be contacted in the future to review the transcripts and drafts of the written report.

I DO DO NOT
Want my name acknowledged in the research.

Signature: _____

CIRCLE:

I AGREE DO NOT AGREE
to be contacted in the future for research participation in similar studies by the same researcher.

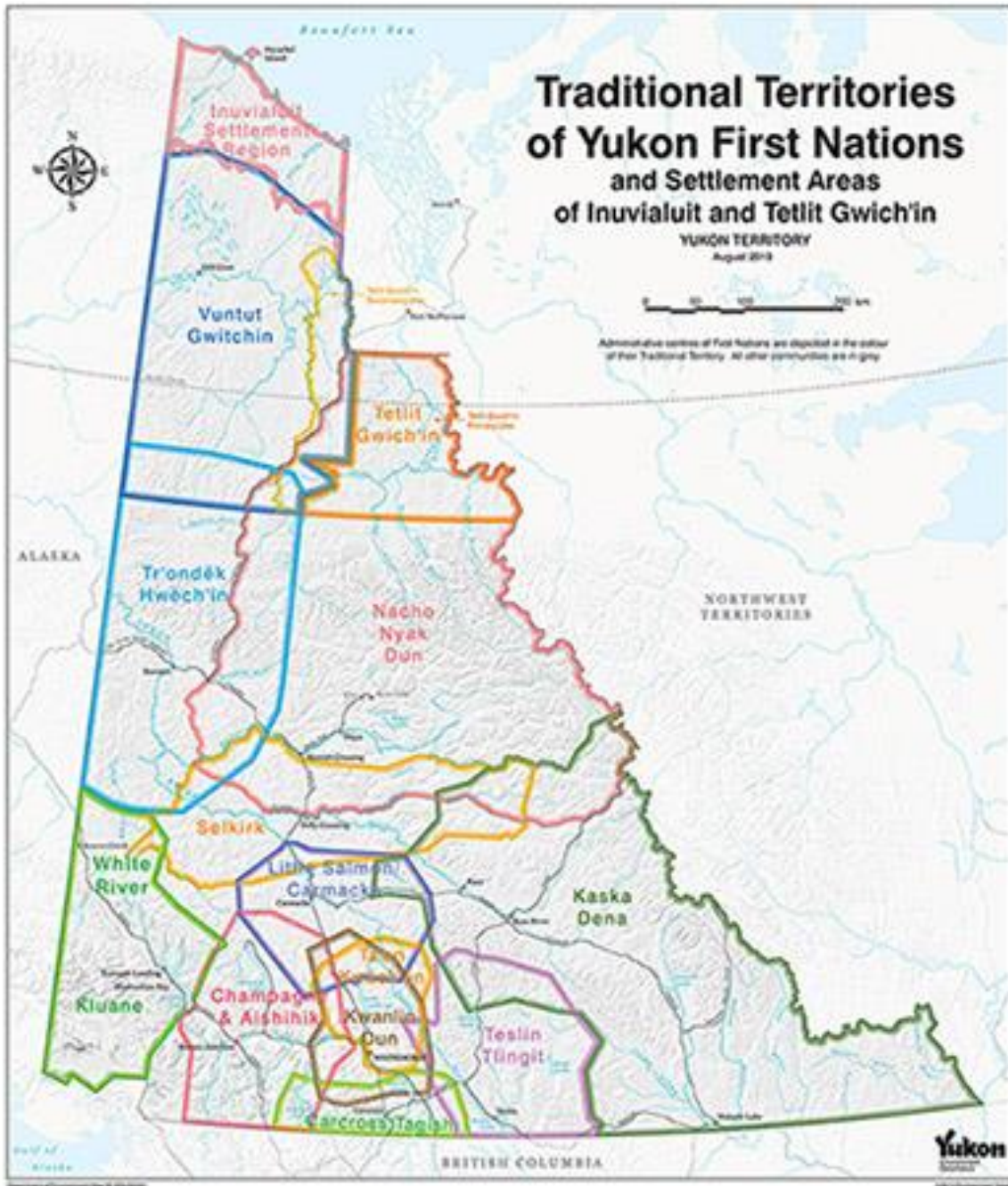
Signature: _____

Appendix E – List of Supports

Contact Numbers for Support/Counselling

- 1) 24 Hour Crisis Line for Indian Residential School Survivors and Family
1-866-925-4419 Website: <http://irsss.ca/resources/24-hour-crisis-line/>
- 2) Yukon Distress and Support Line, 1-844-533-3030 (7pm to midnight).
Website: <http://www.manyrivers.yk.ca/services/yukon-distress-support-line/>
- 3) Many Rivers Counselling Services, 4071-4th Avenue, Whitehorse, Yukon
1-867-667-2970, Website: <http://www.manyrivers.yk.ca/>
- 4) Mental Health Services (Government of Yukon Health & Social Services)
#4 Hospital Road, Whitehorse, Yukon
1-867-667-8346 or Toll Free 1-800-661-0408 ext. 8346,
Website: http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca/mental_health.php
- 5) CAIRS Yukon (Committee on Abuse in Residential Schools Society)
404-4th avenue, Whitehorse, Yukon 1-867-667-2247
- 6) Counselling for Indian Residential School Survivors
1-877-477-0775, Website: <http://irsss.ca/resources/counselling/>
- 7) IRSSS – Indian Residential School Survival Society 1-800-721-0066
Website: <http://irsss.ca/#start>
- 8) FNHA (First Nation Health Authority) Health Benefits
1-800-317-7878 or 1-855-550-5454 (General Inquiries)
Website: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/nihb-ssna/benefit-prestation/crisis-urgence/guide-eng.php#a41>

Appendix F – Traditional Territories of Yukon FNs



Government of Yukon. (2017). Traditional Territories of Yukon First Nations, and Settlement Areas of Inuvialuit & Tetlit Gwich'in. [Online government website]. Retrieved from <http://www.env.gov.yk.ca/maps/view/detail/3/28/448>